

The University of Chicago

THE PROBLEM OF GOD'S IDENTITY
IN COSMIC CHANGE

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND ETHICS

By
ADOLPH SCHOCK

Private Edition, Distributed by
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARIES
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1932

The University of Chicago

THE PROBLEM OF GOD'S IDENTITY
IN COSMIC CHANGE

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND ETHICS

By
ADOLPH SCHOCK

Private Edition, Distributed by
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARIES
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1932

From a dissertation submitted June, 1931



INTRODUCTION.

In the past decade the shift from a Christo-centric theology to a theo-centric philosophy marked one of the most significant changes in theological interest. Whatever the causes were for this shift of interest cannot be discussed within the limits of this thesis. Many perplexing problems accompany our new interest in present-day theology, one of which is unquestionably the quest for God. Some modern writers show great concern for man and magnify his place in the universe to the extent that the entire quest of the ages can be summed up in man's quest to find a happy fellowship with his neighbor. Others direct our attention to the matter of morality for tomorrow, or to religion and the next generation, or the place of worship for modern man. These are all important problems which the theologian cannot evade nor ignore. The matter of God's identity in cosmic change, which is the problem under discussion in this thesis, is also a great problem for the theologian, the complexity of which is not easily analyzed. Theories are so shortlived in our modern world that our beliefs are ever in the process of modification. Such terms as immutable natural laws and absolutes have almost dropped from our vocabulary. The advice given us by science that the changing world demands agile minds cannot be challenged. How shall we think of God in the evolutionary process of the universe, and how shall we define his identity in the constant flux and emergence of new levels?

Let me state first the nature of the problem itself, and second, the different methods of approach to the problem under discussion in this thesis.

I make the assumption in this thesis that the position taken by certain types of emergent evolution offer a more satisfactory basis for a theistic view of the world than either a purely mechanistic or vitalistic conception. Whatever term we give to the element in the evolutionary process which characterizes the movement as creative, or as an upward tendency, it is plausible, I believe, to designate that trend as God. This upward and onward movement in the universe is one of the many trends or directions, but it is one which dominates over all others. This trend or nîsus can be called God.

The specific problem which I seek to explore is whether we can designate the nîsus in the evolutionary process, or let us call it God, as being identical at every state or emergent levels.

or whether the concept cannot be applied to God at all. I state the problem in detail in chapter three. In chapter one I attempt to show that the belief in God as a static, unchangeable, being is not adequate and consistent with modern thought. Consequently, the acceptance of the evolutionary point of view, which is more en rapport with modern thought, raises the problem of defining God's identity in the emergence of the 'new'. The rejection of the idea of God as a static and unchanging being, fixed and permanent, requires an explanation of the creative or integrating process in the universe, and whether the process is one of unbroken continuity or not. If there are unbridgable gaps which exist between the different orders of creation, how can we preserve the identity of God from one level to another? If God is progressive integration, or the nîsus in the universe which tends upward, or whatever name we give to this creative process, is God existentially or qualitatively, or functionally identical at the various levels of existence, so that his identity is preserved from the atomic level to the realm of personality in man? This is a very relevant issue and it necessitates an explanation of the concepts of continuity, change and identity.

The central issue of this thesis is therefore the problem of IDENTITY. After having shown what the concept of identity means in logic and philosophy in general, I shall indicate the validity of the concept as applied to God. This portion of my thesis constitutes chapter three. In the fourth chapter I shall take up three modern representatives of the position advanced in my discussion, namely, that God is a definite trend in the universe.

Having stated summarily the nature of the problem of this thesis, let me also state the different methods of approach to the problem. There are at least three methods of approach to the problem of God, two of which do not fall within the compass of my discussion. In terms of religion one may approach the idea of God from the point of view of individual experience. Throughout the history of mankind we have traces of definite religious experiences of God on whom the group felt dependent for its well-being. The socio-political background of every age furnished the patterns by which God was made intelligible. In terms of theology the approach to the problem of God means that we accept as authoritative a certain rationalized belief about God. While religion is an attempt to utilize God for practical life, theology seeks to show what function God has in religion and how we may think clearly about him. The question about God's identity in emergent levels cannot be solved by the two approaches just mentioned - approach of religion or theology. To be sure God has significance in human experience and theology can assure us of the value of beliefs

about him, but it falls to the task of philosophy to elucidate the problem of the identity of God in the cosmic process. This will be fundamentally the method of approach in my discussion.

The acceptance of the evolutionary conception of the universe has led to many conflicting views about God and his manifestation in the world. The subject of this thesis shows that the main problem under discussion is one which arose out of the conflict of traditional orthodoxy with modern thought. In order to get the right perspective of the issues at stake it will be essential to sketch the background of the conflict and show what solution was offered. The evolutionary conception of life has led to a different understanding of the nature of things. The idea of creation, progress, which were two main issues between science and religion, took on a different explanation. The method employed on the part of science was entirely different from the method of traditional religion, consequently the conflict between science and religion, principally between the mechanistic view of life and creation by divine fiat, took very extreme forms. A mediation between the two positions hardly seemed possible, until the idea of emergent evolution offered reconciliation by its new conception of life and God.

The bearing of the evolutionary conception of life had tremendous significance for a new interpretation of God himself. To those who rejected the conception that all life is a development from the lower and more elemental forms of life to the higher and more integrated type, the bearing of evolution upon their religious views was not very serious. To the more open-minded the problem of understanding God in the ever creative process of the universe led to two different points of view regarding the nature of God. On the one hand we have those who believed that the evolutionary conception of the universe was sound, and that it is simply God's method of his own manifestation, but that God himself is outside the process and is not a changing or a becoming being. The other view was more extreme and it considered God as a creative energy or nisus of the evolutionary process in which God achieves his own being.

In the first chapter I shall sketch in broad outline the fundamental background of the problem in order to comprehend the right perspective of the main issues involved. A historical survey of the idea of permanence and change in the history of philosophy, contrasting the pre-evolutionary with the evolutionary period, and their respective contributions to the problem, forms the material in the second chapter. In chapter three I state the nature of the problem of God's identity in emergent levels, concluding with an evaluation and criticism of current interpretations of God, in chapter four.

Chapter III. MEANING OF THE CONCEPT IDENTITY IN PHILOSOPHY.

The concept of identity has its roots in the concept of permanence and change. In the second chapter I indicated the importance of the problem of permanence and change in the history of philosophy, and I concluded there that the historical perspective enables one to give a proper estimate of this specific problem of identity. In the light of the discussion in chapter two we can now proceed to consider the concept of identity, first as to its meaning in classical philosophy, or philosophy in general, and second as to its meaning in the philosophy of religion, as applied to God.

1. Identity in classical philosophy.

By classical philosophy I do not mean the philosophy of a definite period, or of a definite type, but simply philosophy in general. I wish to state first the meaning of the problem of identity in philosophy and the various aspects of its importance. Next I will show the logic and validity of the concept when applied to God in theistic philosophy. Then in my concluding chapter I will evaluate the outstanding current theistic philosophies in the light of my interpretation of the problem of identity in the present chapter.

In discussing the problem of permanence and change in the history of philosophy, in chapter two, emphasis upon sense perception and intellect shifted according to the various points of view of the different philosophies. The same problem confronts us again in discussing the meaning of the concept of identity. What is the meaning of a concept? How do we know the external world? What is the relation of a logical construct to empirical experience? What is the relative importance of sense and reason? These are some of the relevant questions to which I wish to refer in connection with my interpretation of the meaning of the concept of identity in a changing world.

(1) Knowing the external world.

Is there anything other in the external world, or in existence, than our sense-data? Can we infer any existence other than our own sense-data? Our answer to these questions is in the affirmative if we maintain that objects of sense exist at times when we are not perceiving them, or that objects inferred from sense objects exist either when we are perceiving them or at any other time. Bertrand Russell implies an affirmative answer to the question when he says: "Can the existence of anything other

than our own hard data be inferred from these data?"¹ In being aware of sensible objects we have a sensation. The cause of the sensation is thus outside of us. And if the object of sensation can exist independent of our consciousness and can make itself known to our senses through sensation it exists outside of us. This is clearly the position which all realistic philosophers take. The external world is knowable, but it consists of so many things with many qualities and relations that we cannot know all the things and the qualities, for it is very complex. But we can extend our own knowledge of the sensible world beyond our own private data and make propositions about the physical world. This assertion is very fundamental to my problem, and I hope to clarify it somewhat in this chapter. In other words, it is the problem of logic on the one hand, and empirical fact, on the other.

The mystic, who denies the reality of the external world, seeks behind it a reality which is ideal and does not change nor is it in the stream of flux like the external world. This view however is not very acceptable. We have a common knowledge of the external world, and our data are to be investigated and purified by philosophical scrutiny. Sense experience, facts of history, scientific experience - all present different degrees of certainty of our common knowledge, which is either of a derivative or primitive sort. The latter type of knowledge is self-evident, for it is not a logical deduction or inference, while the former arises through associations of ideas, that is, we infer or derive beliefs by some extra-logical process.

(2) Concepts and Universals.

In dealing with the concept of God's identity in emergent levels we are confronted with several difficult problems, one of which is the function of logic. Is it within the realm of logic to maintain that God's identity is preserved in the evolutionary process, or that he is identical in function at each emergent level?

We noted that in the movement of Rationalism and Empiricism there was a sharp division between the function of sense and reason, perception and conception, etc. The same problem arose under another form, namely, between Realism and Nominalism, and according to the latter, universals are only abstractions from particulars. Socrates, for instance, sought a universal, or an objective something, under which particulars could be subordinated. For Plato the universal never changed, but was the fundamental being. Also Aristotle held that the real was the universal, yet he was also interested in being, becoming, relationships etc.

1. Bertrand Russell, Scientific Method in Philosophy, p.83.

In experience we have always two elements - sense-data and concepts. Are these two rivals? Must we take sides with Rationalism or Empiricism?

By sense-data is meant the given to the mind, and by concepts the product of activity of thought, that is, a priori.² It is the task of philosophy to interpret our common experience which consists of these two elements. The question is this, whether sense-data or immediate experience is ultimate reality. According to the mystic the answer is in the affirmative, that is, reality is immediate experience. Some Neo-realists also share a similar view, namely, that thought and reflection are selective of what was included in our perception, but the given data are not modified.

What function has a concept? In order to think logically we must have concepts. We communicate with each other by concepts, and they are mediums of human intercourse, and thus to a certain extent they are fixed and resist change. A concept may have identical status in existence, but that can only be verified by experimental test. Concepts and universals have a social basis and are the result of a definite social process. John Dewey³ says there are no pure ideas or pure reason. An idea has always relation to a practical situation. Philosophy is a process of reflection which has its roots, or its parallel, in social life, or at least there is a close bearing of the socio-political situation on the philosophy which arose out of that particular time. Dewey maintains that there are no universals, and we cannot proceed from universals, but we must live experimentally.

Even metaphysical speculation is not detached from the attitudes of the social situation. Since the group attitudes are essential in the forming of concepts and universals, it follows that they do not exist independently in a psychical realm, but are to be viewed as processes in a natural order. Man is an organism interacting in his environment in terms of stimulus and response. Long before mind occurs in man and before his experience is cognitive he behaves in a definite way in his environment.⁴

This view of the social genesis of universals or concepts is in harmony with the evolutionary point of view that man is an organism reacting to his environment and develops to a self-conscious being, and thus becomes gradually cognitive. I will show somewhat later that this view is entirely different from the view which explains the identity of the self in terms of substance.

2. C. I. Lewis, Mind and the World Order, Ch.II.

3. John Dewey, German Philosophy and Politics, p.7f.

4. J. G. Locke, The Social Genesis of Universals, Ph.D thesis, University of Chicago, June 1923.

There are stages in man's development. First, he is an organism in a physical environment to which he reacts in terms of physical objects. His conduct becomes transformed when he reaches the stage of social interaction in the social process to which he must respond in order to carry on the life process. The stage of reflective experience comes in at the point where man is confronted with a situation to which he must respond in a non-immediate way.

In view of man's genetic development he ultimately develops from a mere responding to a stimulus to a reflective being. Mental activity is thus only of secondary formation, as well as that of self conduct. Concepts or universals are not purely mental or spiritual but are of the same nature as all responses of the organisms. The universal in this sense is a general order or conduct accepted by all, basic to which is the symbol and its meaning. This is essentially the position of Locke to whose thesis I have just referred. The universal has thus a social character and is not something purely mental or psychical or metaphysical.

(3) Place of Logic in Philosophy.

Logic still has a place in philosophic thought even though we have become skeptical about any kind of theory, because new facts alter our previous position. An ultimate theory seems impossible. What method may we resort to in order to attain ultimate truth? May we resort to logic? Russell⁵ suggests that in this scientific age we have gone too far in the practical side and on the theoretical side we lack the patience, but if we are truly inspired by the spirit of modern science we should indulge more in abstract logic. However, not the subject-predicate logic of Aristotle's reasoning but rather an inductive method of reasoning should be our present day logic. According to the traditional type of logic a science could be build up which owed nothing to observation and sense, that is, it disclosed an ideal world of forms which reason alone could point out. It was syllogism. Since Aristotle's time philosophy was a rational enterprise in which logic furnished the patterns to which reality or real objects had to conform. Hegel, for instance, developed a type of logic in his philosophy by means of a priori reasoning and showed that the world must be consistent and not a self-contradictory unit. The existing world had to conform to his concept-world.

Logic, according to Russell's point of view, is very important for philosophy; it makes possible abstract thinking, but no longer in classical terms which had no regard to concrete experience. There are two kinds of logic: pure logic and atomistic logic. The former is a priori, while the latter is independent

of logic, that is, it is existential truth - facts of sense-perception, and hence independent of our thought or opinion.⁶ Pure logic does not depend upon the particular facts, or qualities, or things of the existent world, for pure logic gets its end purely theoretically, but atomic logic depends upon empirical observation, it refers to actual conditions, and is not simply correctness or inference from premises to conclusion. In modern science logic is the "search for the ultimate criteria by the use of which our beliefs can be validated and true knowledge be attained."⁷

In a restricted sense the scientist must deal conceptually, for scientific theory belongs both to the world of thought and of events. But the type of logic which conceives the world of being as invariant existences and as unchanging, as eternal, is no concern of science. Science only requires logic for the organization of facts - its an instrument.

So then pure logic and atomic facts, or truth and facts, are the two poles of certainty. In the use of logic in philosophy we must clearly distinguish between the two methods - thought-knowledge and sense-knowledge, truth and fact. I intend to show in the last chapter of my thesis that the problem of God's identity in emergent levels is not simply a problem of pure logic or a priori reasoning, but a problem of sense-experience as well. Let us discover now what continuity and identity mean in philosophy.

(4) Meaning of continuity in philosophy.

The problem of the concept of continuity may be approached from three different view-points: psychology, mathematics and physics. The concept of continuity according to psychology is defined as primarily concerned with "a continuity of function to which the structure is altogether subservient. ...it takes the form of personal or individual identity and is the continuity of living experience."⁸ I shall elaborate this point more fully in my next section in connection with identity of the self in terms of substance etc.

In terms of mathematics and logic the problem of continuity is a question of possibilities. "It is a logical abstract theory, not dependent for its validity upon any properties of actual space and time."⁹ The concept of continuity is a hypothesis, and although it is consistent with the facts of experience and of logic experienced continuity cannot be verified.

6. British Contemporary Philosophy, p. 359, (Collective Work).

7. W. P. Montague, Ways of Knowing, p. 34.

F. Barry, Scientific Habit of Thought, p.184.

8. "Continuity," Proceedings Aristotelian Society, IV.27, H. Carr.

9. Bertrand Russell, op. cit. Ch.V.

"The continuity of space and time, the infinite number of different shades of the spectrum etc, are all in the nature of unverifiable hypotheses - perfectly possible logically, perfectly consistent with the known facts, and similar technically than any other tenable hypotheses, but not the sole hypotheses which are logically and empirically adequate."¹⁰

In other words, even though empirical continuity is unverifiable, yet there is nothing in the crude facts of the physical world which is inconsistent with the mathematical concepts of continuity. This is fundamentally Russell's conclusion.

According to Mr. Carr's point of view,¹¹ the problem of continuity in physics is essentially "how are we to construct conceptually the atomic system consistently with the phenomenally observed by the spectroscope?" The difference between the reality or objects of physics and of sense is great. Objects and things like chairs etc are quite permanent. In terms of physics things change their form or even their chemical substance, and they are not quite as permanent as they seem to be. The old view of the permanence and conservation of matter by which we explained all change is no longer tenable. "Thus a thing may be defined as a certain series of appearances, connected with each other by continuity and by certain causal laws."¹² It is important to note that to define a thing which changes in terms of resemblance and continuity of appearance the criterion of continuity is not enough, but causal laws which connect events at different times. While it is not possible to advance sufficient empirical evidence to prove either continuity or identity of sense objects or even matter, it is more consistent from a scientific point of view to assume both, so thinks Russell. The problem is how the concept of continuity as a logical, formal principle correlates with the concrete, that is, in the realm of physical existence, requires verification; and even if sufficient evidence or verification is not possible it is still more consistent to assert continuity than to reject it. Since there are never enough sense data at one time for the actual world, but are always sense data plus further possibilities of sense data, or what Whitehead calls the actual and the possible, as the two elements which characterize the synthetic process of the universe, it makes verification a matter of great difficulty.

Let us now see what distinct meaning the concept of continuity has in philosophy. I have already shown that the idea of

10. Ibid., p. 148.

11. Op. cit., p. 46.

12. Bertrand Russell, op. cit. p. 106f.

continuity has bearing upon philosophy as it furnishes the right kind of logic for philosophic thought. An ardent exponent of the concept of continuity is found in the philosophy of Charles Peirce:

"In philosophy the language of continuity, without which no physical science could have come into being, is to this day a strange tongue. ...Continuity is the lucerna pedibus in all the dark paths of logical and philosophical inquiry."¹³ He employs the term 'synechism' as a term describing the process of holding together or making continuous. He says further that absolute discontinuity of being contradicts being or quality. By comparison we can describe a quality or being as having relations of likeness or difference. Even variation never involves discontinuity but it has the mode of potential continuity. When a difference is excluded of potential continuity it would be a difference of kind and not degree. The concept of continuity is more than a hypothesis, "it is a formally necessary, an empirically adequate analysis of the meaning of comparison or classification. It is the definitive analysis of analysis."¹⁴ The Quantum theory seems to affirm discontinuity, for according to this theory an electron, for instance, does not continuously traverse its course in space, but exists discontinuously in space and is very unlike the continuous existence of objects we know. The electron has an "orbit which can be regarded as a series of detached positions and not as a continuous line."¹⁵ Although this seems sufficient proof for discontinuity, it applies only as to forms and not as to the possibilities of continuity.

The concept of continuity has been a problem for every system of philosophy, as I have already indicated in the previous chapter. Descartes conceived continuity as an externally imparted activity, imposed from without on matter. Leibnitz criticised this conception of energy as constant in quantity and indestructible, and he replaced it with the conception of force as an activity originating internally, better known as his conception of monads. Modern physics explains continuity as atomic energy.

The evolution of the mind throws some light upon this problem of continuity. According to the old view of the development of the mind, it was held that the mind was not a corollary of the general theory of organic evolution, because that meant a threat to religion and morality to conceive the mental powers as a result of long processes of development. Today, however, evolution is considered as an all-comprehensive process and the old

13. Monist, Oct. 1929, article by Chas. Hartshorne.

14. Loc. cit.

15. A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World. Ch. 8.

dualism of body and soul is no longer tenable.

According to psychology it is evident that there is some relation between the mental powers of man and the lower animals, and in even by going down the scale from man to unicellular protozoa, we find the rudiments of mentality. Both comparative anatomy and embryology point in the direction of a continuous principle operating in the evolutionary process. According to McDougall's¹⁶ position there is no discontinuity between life and mind by tracing the evolutionary process of mind from above downwards; and if there is a break, he says, it is between the organic and inorganic realms. But he would further contend that we are unable to say that the inorganic realm is entirely mindless, for he attributes these characteristics to mental functions: (1) Awareness of presence. (2) Memory of the past. (3) Anticipation of the future. Even on the level of the simplest forms of life there seems to be purposive striving. There is not an evolution of Mind but of mental functions, hence mental functions can be ascribed to even inorganic existence. Lloyd C. Morgan says that there is no discontinuity between the unconsciousness of the lower animals and the conscious activity of the higher animals. The emergence of mind or consciousness is simply the emergence of new qualities, which he says, are due to new relatedness. Mind is not a special phenomenon but all evolution is essentially the same process, except that on the stage of the mind emergence takes on a purposive character.¹⁷ The 'new' at each level is not an extra influx from the outside but simply 'differential modes of the self-existent Cause's' manifestation.

(5) Meaning of Identity and Change.

The concept of identity is a problem which has its roots in the history of philosophy. Aristotle was one of the first to offer a solution to the problem of identity by saying that qualities inhere in substance, and while they are in themselves changeless they may be differently distributed at different times; or a new combination of qualities can give rise to a new quality, for example, two colors can in combination produce a third.

Various philosophers felt that the concept of identity presented a real problem, and that it was closely related to the fundamental conception of permanence and change. I need only refer to Hume and Hegel and see how they encountered the problem. Hume conceived of it as essentially a practical problem. Mind is "a heap or collection of different perceptions united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed

16. Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution, p. 120f.

17. Lloyd C. Morgan, Emergent Evolution, Ch. V.

with a perfect simplicity and identity."¹⁸ Perry states Hume thus: "In order to live, it is necessary to regard the environment as having sameness and permanence; it is necessary to assume that one may have dealings at different times with an identical object, and that the objects on which one acts persist in one's absence."¹⁹

Hume, however, was led into a radical phenomenalism, for he concluded that "to be is to be a particular mental state; and a particular mental state has no being whatever, other than its momentary presence."²⁰ Thus, being meant coming into consciousness, and ceasing to be meant lapse from consciousness and from being thought. On this basis he was faced with the problem of permanence, sameness and identity. He realized that for practical life some sort of permanency was essential, but he could not justify it on theoretical grounds. Kant, on the other hand, went a step farther than Hume and said it was not only practically intolerable to deny permanence, identity and sameness to objects but theoretically as well. "Plus implies an order - at least a temporal successiveness - which cannot be contained within any merely momentary state."²¹ While Kant held with Berkeley that knowing is still the ground of being, he gave it a new meaning, namely, knowing is

"the systematizing activity of a universal thinking. ...and he rescued the object from the flux of the human individual's mental states, and gave it permanence, identity and orderly relations."²²

Kant thus showed that the 'categories' were the universal prerequisites of knowledge, and that to reduce all knowledge to a momentary experience, as Hume had done, is not sufficient, for the momentary knowledge "presupposes other knowledge and all knowledge in the end presupposes logic."²³

Thus the idea of identity was a problem of philosophical inquiry. It is also a problem for physics and psychology. What is meant by change, sameness and difference, and how is it possible to say that the physical world is not a mere flux, nor static and that it presents both change and identity? "A thing changes when one or more of its perceivable aspects has either disappeared or given place to new ones."²⁴

Science deals with physical changes, and it is interested in the structure of things. It analyses things into its component

18. R. B. Perry, Present Philosophical Tendencies, p. 139f.

19. Ibid. Loc. cit.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p. 144.

23. Ibid., p. 142.

24. R. W. Sellars, Op. cit. p. 149.

parts. The form or external shape of a material body is really not very essential to the scientist, for he is interested in the thing that persists, that is, the properties of the body and not the particular form of the body of the thing. Science defines physical change in terms of the distribution of matter and energy. Through chemical disintegration a physical body can be changed from one state into another, so that not only the form is changed but a change of the relation of molecules to each other. Physical systems change. This presents a real problem to science.

"The critical realist," says R. W. Sellars, "realizes that he has specific knowledge of change in terms of position, order, structure, behavior and novelty of properties, but the inner life, as it were, of these adjustments and creative fusion in a measure escape him."²⁵

Reality is permanent, yet it changes, but change does not imply annihilation, for though the structure of a physical system changes there is still the conservation of the elements. With our new outlook in terms of modern physics the universe is no longer a mass of dead matter but essentially a universe of action. There is no longer the great gulf between matter and life, for matter approximates life in the sense that it too is creative, and even in the colloidal state it discloses properties which seem to anticipate life in its most primitive forms. However, the world of sense and the world of physics are difficult to correlate. Modern physics no longer goes on the assumption of permanence as the basis of science. Russell defines a thing "as a certain series of appearance, connected with each other by continuity and by certain causal laws."²⁶

To what extent can we say there is identity in spite of change? If we mean by identity the exclusion of change then it is contradictory to speak of change at all. Sellars says that it is simply paradoxical to say a thing is the same in spite of change.²⁷ He advanced these reasons in favor of change which does not destroy the continuity of existence: First, so long as the reality of a thing is not annihilated it has continued existence. Second, by comparison of two bodies or things as being alike

"so we can compare the same object seen at different times. Though things are not permanent, but constantly changing and dissolving, yet there is a continuity in their successive appearance which enables us to trace the thing from its fresh newness to its disintegration."²⁸

25. Ibid. p. 161.

26. Op. cit. p. 106.

27. R. W. Sellars, op. cit. p. 149f.

28. Ibid.

If it is logical to say that an object may change and still be identical in spite of change, that it is possible to recognize its identity, at what point is an object different? An object is distinguishable in terms of its spatial position, its structure and quality. The growth of an organism does not destroy its identity, as long as there is a certain continuity of appearance and structure which enables us to recognize it. Continuity implies a certain degree of identity, but identity does not exclude change. For the recognition of the identity of a thing it is sufficient to trace the stages of its continuous existence, and "so long as there is enough contentual identity to satisfy us, an organism can be said to maintain its identity."²⁹

We might summarize in saying that physical things or organisms change, but though they change they are still to a degree identical in their continuous existence. For instance, my first Parker fountain pen which I purchased two decades ago and which I am still using is the same pen as far as its form goes, yet every part of it has been repaired at one time or another so that none of the original pen exists now. I still call it the same pen. It renders me the same service and its form is unquestionably identical with my first pen. Gradual change does not destroy the identity of an object, provided there is enough contentual identity, for identity does not exclude change, but such identity does not necessarily include identity of substance or of the same material. In the case of organisms we say they are identical in terms of their material and unity or qualities, though the embryo is constantly changing, yet because of the unity of organization we call them identical.

The concept of identity can be further elucidated by a consideration of the identity of the self. As far as my legal obligations are concerned I am considered to be the identical man today that I was yesterday. In form and capacity I am relatively the same, yet in numerical substance I may not be the same, for I may have gained or lost weight, whatever the same might be. But as far as my knowledge is concerned I know that I am the same, and I also feel the same. As I have already stated, identity does not preclude change, but continuity implies identity. If then I say that I am identical today to the person I was yesterday I mean that in content and feeling I am the same; there is a recurrence of identical feeling - I am existentially identical.

According to the substance theory of the self³⁰ the problem of identity is greatly simplified. By analysis of experience we get the idea of self, which is permanent, and its distinctive feat-

29. Ibid., p. 154.

30. Mind, XXXVIII, p.312. Also, John Laird, Problems of the Self.

ures are unity of cognition, feeling and endeavor. This unity and continuity exist whenever a self exists. These features develop together and decline together, yet they may not all be equally developed. This point of view is that the mind, consciousness or soul is a substance, immaterial and existing in time, superior to matter and indivisible. This substance is the permanent basis of all experience, and it makes possible personal identity and the continuity of the self, both of which are based upon the unity and continuity of experience. The exponents of the substance theory of the self minimize the problems raised by multiple and abnormal personalities, and concentrate upon the kind of continuity and degree of identity implied in the unity of the self. They say the self or soul stands over and above the various experiences and gives unity, and we need a self or soul in addition to psychological process or bits of consciousness.³¹

A position contrary to the substantial view is a definition of the unity of the self in terms of an interpretation of mental events with one another. This view is a more recent idea which is prevalent in modern scientific thought, and the self is defined as mental action and not in terms of substance. The ultimate unit is not the thing but the movement. This point of view is thoroughly scientific, and the important question is whether it can be also applied to the mental realm, so that mind is analyzed into a series of events, like we analyze physical things into a series of events, which are interrelated according to certain laws.³²

Generally speaking while substance is still regarded as the principle upon which existence is construed in some present-day philosophies, it is not the leading point of view, for it shows too close linkage with scholasticism. Other points of view, such as Kant, Fichte etc make the self dependent upon a higher cosmic principle which dominates over it. Kant gives primacy to the Will - the self consists in the experience of the Will. We question though whether all experiences can be classified under the Will, and whether there are not other experiences which make up the self besides those of the Will.

The identity of the self in terms of substance is then explained as being identical in the unity of feeling, cognition and endeavor. The quality of the substance of the self remains identical, therefore, personal identity is preserved.

Locke³³ defined identity in terms of existence itself. Identity meant identical existence by comparison of a former

31. Husserl, Logische Untersuchungen; R.H.Lotze, Microcosmus.

32. C. D. Broad, Mind and its place in Nature. Ch. 13.

33. Essay, Book IV. Chapter III.

existence with the present existence. Personal identity depends on the same consciousness. Hume, on the other hand, limited identity to material things only, and claimed it to be a misapprehension to say that there is identity, because "we neglect changes which are inconsiderable in proportion to the whole object we are considering."³⁴ For instance, a mountain may change by diminution or addition and yet not be sufficient to be recognized, while only a few inches change in some other body would destroy its identity. Again, through gradual change we also disregard the fact of change, for instance, a child growing to manhood or womanhood; they are not identical but the use of identity in these cases is fictitious. This is a very extreme view, and it is not tenable with the view I have taken in defining identity in terms of organization and of function.

The identity of the self is further strengthened by the uniqueness of personal individuality. Among all the organisms in the universe, human individuality has a distinctive characteristic which inorganic things do not possess in the same degree. Man has a higher degree of independence of self-sufficiency, and is more integrated with the evolutionary process than other organisms. Complexity of organization and function lead to uniqueness and individuality. Decrease of complexity in the functions of the organism leads to decrease of individuality.³⁵

Smuts³⁶ has pointed out very clearly that in the holistic process of life the mechanistic principle diminishes, although at the lower form it is dominant in the higher levels mechanism decreases and spiritual qualities become dominant. The relative proportion of mechanism and spiritualism is a matter of the evolutionary process, of the simplicity or uniqueness of organization. If a human organism has greater capacities than a lower form of organism, and is more highly organized in its functions, it is obvious that man is more unique and possesses a greater degree of individuality. So then the fact of the individuality and uniqueness of the human organism and personality are two essential elements of the identity of the self, whether that self be interpreted in terms of substance or as a series of events and experience.

When we speak of identity which relates to a different order or orders of existence, the concept has a similar meaning. On the atomic level of existence the concept can only apply to the immutable number and qualities of the atoms. The analysis of atoms into their constituent electrons and protons, that is, negative and positive units, indicates that their structural arrangement

34. Hume, Treatise, p. 256, quoted by Larid, op. cit., p. 325.

35. R. W. Sellars, op. cit., p. 164.

36. Op. cit. Ch. VII.

approximates that of the solar system, with the planetary electrons revolving around a central positive nucleus. The electronic content of atoms has been pretty well established by modern chemistry, and their number and weight, as well as position, are known. The identity of atoms is defined in terms of the grouping of the electrons as well as their number and quality. Two atoms are identical when their structural arrangement, their protons and electrons, are in identical approximation, and have identical qualitative content. On the level of matter identity means identical arrangement of atoms in the same configuration. The constituent properties of matter, chemical and physical, depend upon the structural arrangements of the atomic units.

It has become apparent thus far that the concept of identity is applicable in two ways, that is, that there are two kinds of identity - logical or precise identity, and existential identity. Logical identity disregards the existential character and stresses the empirical aspect. The question of existential identity is ordinarily left out of account in dealing with purely logical terms. Existential identity refers to an existing thing or object. If we compare A with A and find that A is exactly identical to A then the identity is numerically correct and the identity is one of existence. If A is like B in every respect the identity can only be qualitative. Existential identity can only apply to the same object or thing, and one can say that even though an object or thing has changed the numerical or existential identity is not lost, but the qualitative identity may no longer be the same. As long as we can attribute continued existence to an object it has existential identity. Ordinarily we limit existential identity to a single object which is in the process of change itself, for instance, the identity of the self. By existential identity we do not mean that there is one permanent and changeless element, but rather that the identity is preserved though there be difference and newness.³⁷

Another aspect of the problem of identity in the flux of change is how knowledge is possible at all since our knowledge is always relative to the observing mind. One view is that no knowledge or certainty can be established wherever change is going on. In modern science this view has passed away, for the scientist turns not to the changeless but to the changing order for knowledge and he seeks to know the flux of nature so that he might control it and have power over events. So by experimental living

37. E. E. Jones gives a critical discussion on "Precise and Numerical Identity," in Mind, XVII, p. 384.
See also, R. W. Sellars, Op. cit., Ch. VIII.

modern man seeks to gain control over the phenomenon of change. John Dewey³⁸ defines the aim of modern science as the "discovery of constant relations among changes in place of definition of objects immutable beyond the possibility of alteration." Science deals with the world of experience and not with ultimates.

"Drop the conception that knowledge is knowledge only when it is a disclosure and definition of the properties of fixed and antecedent reality; interpret the aim and test of knowing by what happens in the actual procedures of scientific inquiry, and the supposed need and problem vanish."³⁹

Quite a different position is that of Santayana when he says that knowledge implies that there is absolute truth ... and "if eternal, the desultory view taken from time to time by individuals would themselves be absolute."⁴⁰ But absolutes have no place in the vocabulary of modern science. According to modern physics concepts have only operational value, that is, we define a concept not in terms of its properties but in terms of actual operation, and with every change of operation a concept has a different meaning.⁴¹ According to Newton knowing signified a process of identification and the stress was upon properties of objects and not upon operations performed. Modern scientific inquiry does not exclude prior knowledge in getting new knowledge, but it treats it only as an instrument of new inquiries and not as the norm which determines their validity.

Summary Statement.

The evolutionary change of the universe reveals a process which can be described as continuous. It is more in accordance with modern scientific thought and logic to infer continuity since verifiable evidence cannot be sufficiently advanced to prove continuity in every instance. According to psychology the concept means continuity of function, that is, continuity of living experience. This type of continuity requires some form of personal or individual identity. In terms of mathematics and logic the concept of continuity is a purely abstract term and deals with possibilities and is not dependent for its validity upon any actual situation. Continuity may not be verifiable in every case, yet it is tenable to infer it. If we characterize a process as continuous we imply that there is something identical in the process, whether it is identity of function, quality or existence.

38. Quest for Certainty, p. 102.

39. Ibid., p. 103.

40. Realm of Essence, XV.

41. Bridgman, The Logic of Modern Physics.

Also: A. N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World.

2. Meaning of identity in theistic philosophy.

Having analyzed the meaning of the concept identity in philosophy in general, we can now undertake a discussion of the problem of defining the identity of God in emergent levels.

(1) Meaning of levels.

In dealing with the problem of God's identity in the cosmic process of change we recognize first of all the fact that the universe displays different levels or orders of existence. If various levels are distinguishable in the evolutionary process it is apparent that the process is gradatory. This fact has been recognized by practically all philosophies, although they do not all agree as to the precise number which the process reveals. S. Alexander speaks of six levels: space-time, primary qualities, matter, secondary qualities, life and mind, with the possible level of deity.⁴² By Deity he means the next higher level to the highest we know. Lloyd Morgan speaks of three levels: matter, life and spirit.⁴³ R. W. Sellars, an evolutionary naturalist, says the universe has three levels: matter, life and mind.⁴⁴ According to Smuts⁴⁵ there are four levels: matter, life, mind and personality. Conger, in reviewing the problem of levels, suggests there might be as many as twenty five such levels, for the mind itself might include various levels.⁴⁶ The important point which is relevant to this discussion is not to reach a conclusion as to the precise number of levels which the universe displays, but rather to recognize the fact that the evolutionary process is gradatory and that we can distinguish several levels with precise exactness. According to H. N. Wieman the universe displays five orders: physico-chemical, biological, psychological, personal and metaphysical.⁴⁷ By the last order he means the order of all orders, that is, it is the constitution of the universe which makes the universe what it is. But, while there is order in the universe there is also chaos, for according to the quantum theory and the "Gestaltpsychologie", the universe is chaotic, and we only think order in it. Chaos is a necessary part of the process which makes for value; as soon as chaos is gone consciousness fades out and we have no experience of value. Just what bearing the metaphysical order has upon God I hope to show presently. First, let me define the meaning of an order or level.

42. S. Alexander, Space, Time and Deity, Vol. II, 8, 332.

43. Lloyd C. Morgan, Matter, Life and Spirit.

44. R. W. Sellars, Evolutionary Naturalism, p. 8, 337.

45. J. C. Smuts, Holism, Ch. X.

46. G. P. Conger, J. of Phil. XXII, 309-21, "Doctrine of Levels,"

47. H. N. Wieman, Philosophy of Theism, lecture notes.

A level is simply defined as an order in the universe which is distinguishable from another, either as higher or lower, more inclusive or less inclusive, better or worse. These terms are variously employed, depending upon the terms in which they are used as, spatial, valuational or logical differences. Alexander defined a level as a structure which leads to the emergence of a new quality.⁴⁸ According to evolutionary naturalism, as represented by Spaulding and Sellars, the formation of new qualities through the organization of the parts into whole is a process of creative synthesis. In other words, the new quality of the resulting whole, which is the result of creative synthesis, is more than the integrated parts by themselves.⁴⁹ The rise of higher levels rests upon the potentialities of the lower levels. Lloyd Morgan defined levels in terms of development as "involution and dependence." "I speak of even⁵⁰ at any given level in the pyramid of emergent evolution as 'involving' concurrent events at lower levels'...."But when some new kind of relatedness is supervenient (say at the level of life), the way in which the physical events which are involved run their course is different in virtue of its presence - different from what it would have been if life had been absent." He illustrated this point after this manner, that if A, B, and C coexist in an complex system, so that C involves coexistence of B, and B, C, and whereas the A-kind does not involve the coexistence of B, nor B that of C, then it is evident that C is higher than B, and B than A. The new level depends on the fact of relatedness.⁵¹

How does one level develop from earlier levels? This is an important question. Lloyd Morgan says that a new level arises from a lower level by virtue of the emergence of a new quality, which is not a mere resultant but due to a new relatedness. In this way the universe manifests a *nisus*, that is, a tendency or direction toward something yet to be attained. Alexander shares fundamentally the same view on this point. Also Sellars' view of creative synthesis means that a "system is more than an external sum of parts, that it is an organization in which the whole exerts a control over the parts, that the resultant is a function of the system."⁵¹ A new level might be explained then in terms of creative synthesis, or due to the process of integration, or emergence of new qualities.

The problem of levels is a rather complex affair. It is apparent that there are many forces at work in the process of nature, and that complicates the analysis of the process. At every

48. Op. cit., Vol. II, 45, 54.

49. R. W. Sellars, op. cit. p. 296. E.G. Spaulding, New Realism.

50. Op. cit., p. 15.

51. R.W. Sellars, Loc. cit.

level of existence there are these factors: integration, interaction and repetition or reproduction; all of these are operative in the evolutionary process. We are dealing here principally with the problem of finding an ultimate explanation of the evolutionary process, and the question is, what explanation gives sufficient account for the emergence of novelty? The answer given by Naturalism that an organism is a physical structure of a mechanistic physico-chemical nature, is inadequate, for it rules out that part of reality which we experience in our conscious life. Vitalism also does not give a satisfactory answer, for it introduces a non-mechanical agent from the outside which becomes operative in the psycho-physical organism, as Hans Driesch has attempted to show in his theory of Entelechy, by which he explained the nature of the causal relation between the mechanical and the non-mechanical system. The mystery of the physico-chemical organism is not explained in that way. Smuts offered an explanation in terms of a whole-making process which is operative in the universe, and which is more mechanical at the lowest stage but is gradually becoming more and more spiritual until mechanism is reduced to a minimum.⁵² I have already referred to his position at some length and need not dwell upon it at this point, except in saying, that this view of creative evolution, and others who share a similar view, seems very acceptable to a theistic philosophy of the universe.

(2) Meaning of continuity as applied to God.

If the previous statement on the problem of continuity is sound, is it logical to speak of the continuity of God in emergent levels? If we define God as a *nisus* in the universe, that is, as a trend, or as progressive integration, or as moral creativity etc. which the evolutionary process of the universe displays, is it consistent to describe God as having continuity in appearance, structure or function from one order of nature to another? According to my interpretation of the concept continuity as characterizing the changing process of nature, we may well designate God in terms of a *nisus* in the universe as continuous throughout the emergent evolution. I have already stated the point of view of McDougall which is to the effect that there is no discontinuity between life and mind, or even between the organic and inorganic realms, for even the inorganic realm displays characteristics of mental capacities. Also Morgan agrees with this position that the emergence of mind, for instance, is not a special phenomenon but is simply the emergence of new qualities, due to new relatedness, and the entire evolutionary process is essentially the same process, except that on the stage of the mind emergence takes on a purposive

52. J. C. Smuts, op. cit., p.145f.

character.⁵³

If then there is no breach of continuity in nature, nor an unbridgeable gap between one order of nature and another, then it is logical to conclude that we may speak of the continuity of God in the cosmic process, and the principle of evolutionary theism rests then on a sound foundation. But, in saying that the principle of continuity is characteristic of each order in nature, it does not imply that philosophy is interested in the historical emergence, or time-process, or sequence, or in speculations as to the origin of life, but only in the essential structure of the universe. The problem for philosophy is moreover to offer an explanation for the transition from one order of nature to another which is qualitatively different. It is a problem of conserving the continuity of process and the emergence of differences. The position taken by those who speak of God in terms of a *nisus* or trend in the cosmic process is this, that there is continuity of process as well as emergence of difference, and that a "gap" or "break" in the cosmic process is not a chasm which cannot be bridged, except by the introduction of an alien influx into the process, but that it is possible for quantity to pass into quality, and differences of degree into differences of kind.⁵⁴ In this sense it is consistent with modern logic to speak of continuity as characterizing the emergence of new levels of existence, and identify God as being continuous in that process.

Opponents to this point of view see great danger in applying the concept of continuity, as the principle which characterizes the process of the whole realm of nature, to a certain trend or direction in nature, that is, to God. The acceptance of the point of view that the evolutionary process is wholly *en rapport* with modern thought, may lead to two different positions, either that the cosmos as a whole is in process of development and that God himself is in the process and ever consistently becoming more and more realized himself, or that behind it all there is the unchanging Absolute. Most Idealists take the latter position. Pringle-Pattison⁵⁵ speaks of the qualities of goodness and the beautiful as having had existence long before the appearance of Paleolithic man, and that they are in their very nature eternal and not created by any process out of nothing. He further affirms that the evolutionary process manifests the principle of continuity and that it is consistent with the emergence of qualitative differences, and that the whole process shows a progressive revelation, but behind the evolutionary process stands the Absolute - God. "it

53. Lloyd C. Morgan, *op. cit.*, Ch.V.

54. Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of God in Current Philosophy, p.96.

55. Ibid., p. 154f.

seems possible to apply in such a quarter the idea of actual process or growth from less to more". ... "How can anything come in-to being unless it is founded in the nature of things, that is, unless it eternally is."

Turning now to the other position, namely, that God himself has potential qualities for further development in the process of nature, we need mention only two modern exponents of that point of view - A. N. Whitehead and H. N. Wieman. God has two aspects: a primordial nature and a consequent nature.⁵⁶ This is the position of Professor Whitehead. The primordial nature of God is that order which is immanent in the world, but it is an order in which possibilities are to be realized by the present order, and this is the consequent nature of God. The nature of God has thus a determinate as well as an indeterminate aspect. In the process of time that order assumes progressively a certain character by virtue of its order. That is, the character which the world takes on in consequence of God. God is not the change of the flux in the universe but that certain order by which the flux or onward change is constrained, and to which the flux and change is basic. Professor Wieman shares fundamentally a similar view and he defines God as "The order constituting value present in the process of existence and including possible structure of existence which are values yet to be experienced."⁵⁷

These two points of view have a large number of supporters at the present time. While both groups may accept heartily the principle of the evolutionary process itself, they do not give it the same application as regards the growth of God. Abbott⁵⁸ worked out a theology for the evolutionist in which he pays tribute to evolution, and defines it as God's processes of growth - not processes of manufacture. "That process of growth is continuous progressive change, a change from a lower to a higher condition, from a simpler to a more complex condition." This conception he believes is far more acceptable than the conception that God is a manufacturer. Both types of theistic philosophers accept the principle of evolution as the principle which describes the progressive change of the universe to every higher forms and structures of life, except that the one type limits the process to God as merely describing the method by which God brings things to pass, while the other type includes God himself in the progressive change by which God himself achieves more and more of his own being.

56. A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, last chapter.

57. H. N. Wieman, Lecture notes: also, Issues of Life.

58. The Theology of an Evolutionist.

There is therefore no problem between the two types just mentioned regards the concept of continuity itself, but only in relation to the application of the concept to God. My contention is in this thesis that if the concept of continuity is plausible at all in the evolutionary process of nature, it is also logical and applicable to God, namely, that he is continuous throughout the emergent levels of existence, rather than simply being continuous as regards his method of creation.

(3) Meaning of Identity as applied to God.

The concept of continuity implies that there is identity. If the concept of continuity is tenable as describing the progressive change of the universe, it implies that there is something in the continuous process which can be marked as being identical, or similar, or the same. If there is no continuity of process then the concept of identity is not applicable to the progressive change, but has only meaning on each particular level. The view thus far advanced in this thesis was that the evolutionary process of the universe manifests a principle which is continuous throughout the progressive change, and that this same principle can be applied to God, if we define God as a *nisus* or trend in the universe, or as progressive integration etc. We ask therefore a second question, namely, whether God thus described is identical at every level of existence. Can we ascribe the same meaning to God at the atomic level as we do at the level of mind or personality? Or, if God is defined in terms of moral creativity, can we say that his function is similar at each level, and if so, what term can we employ to convey to us its identical meaning? Granting that God is not only active and creative at the lowest stage in the progressive change but present throughout the entire cosmic process, how can we preserve his identity from the level, say of atomic existence, to the level of personality?

The problem of identity is one aspect of the problem of continuity as I have just shown. I have also shown that this problem has touched many points of controversy in the history of philosophy, and that it is still a matter of debate in our day.

Let me state first the arguments advanced by opponents to the conception that we may ascribe identity to a certain trend in the evolutionary process, or even to the process as a whole. They say that the theory of evolutionary progress implies certain restrictions.⁵⁹ There can be no theory whatever which can give a universal explanation for everything, because there is no one common 'evolutionary-formula' which applies to all stages or realms. All we can say, is that there is analogy between the development

59. Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge, *loc. cit.*, XII.

of the various processes, which show a development from simple forms to more complex ones. But analogous development is not identical. Taylor argued that we must guard against the vicious assumption, or

"the insidious tendency to suppose that resemblances of this kind amount to an identity." ... "What they establish is not identity, but analogy...although there are striking resemblances in the physical, mental, social evolution, we are not justified to describe the evolution by one general evolutionary formula."⁶⁰

His conclusion is thus that there may be many evolutionary processes, each with its own formula, rather than a single process with a single law of evolution which can be universally applied. The implication of this position is that we cannot consider the processes of evolution as a continuous process, otherwise we are not justified in asserting that there have been gaps or new starts or emergence of new qualities. Thus, we can only speak of evolution as continuous and identical if we limit the idea to a particular order, but cannot apply it to evolution in general, because we can not construct a formula to cover the transition from one realm to another, for instance, from the inorganic to the organic. It is evident that the above position is dangerous to evolutionary theism such as I am advocating in this thesis.

The fallacy of the above view is quite evident regards its failure to distinguish between sameness and identity. If we mean by identity a form which precludes all change in external or internal relations, then it is illogical to speak of identity as being applicable to two different orders of existence. But identity is not sameness. A tree is not the same today that it was yesterday, for its properties, character and internal relations are not the same, yet it is existentially identical in so far that it has identity of appearance and structure. Identity does not preclude change. A second fallacy of the above point of view, namely, that the evolutionary formula is only applicable to one order and has no meaning when it is applied to all order, is this, that it fails to recognize that though there be difference and newness in the progressive change of nature there can still be continuity of process and identity of function. There are no unbridgeable gaps. As long as we recognize something identical in the progressive change of things, whether it is identity of function, quality or existence, we are justified logically to characterize the entire process of nature as continuous, though something new emerges. This view advanced in my thesis is in accordance with the spirit of modern science, I believe.

60. Ibid, p. 432.

Chapter IV. CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS OF GOD.

In this concluding chapter I wish to present three current interpretations of God which are characteristic of modern thought. Each one of the interpretations presented seeks to reconcile the evolutionary point of view of the universe with God. In my choice of these three writers I was principally guided by the recognition which they have gained as representatives of a definite type of thought. They are: Neo-realism - Samuel Alexander; Idealism - E. W. Lyman; Critical Realism (?) - H. N. Wieman. The method of treatment of each point of view will be essentially the same. I will first state the conception of God of each writer and then give an evaluation of that conception in the light of the main problem under discussion in this thesis, namely, the identity of God in emergent levels. In the case of S. Alexander it will be essential to a better understanding to relate his point of view to Neo-realism in general, since the term Neo-realism has such a vague meaning. I shall indicate only briefly how Lyman's position is related to Idealism. As Dr. Wieman is difficult to classify I do not speak of him as belonging to a definite organized group of thinkers, although some designate him as a critical realist, which term however he rejects. In the last section I will state the problem in review and will show what specific problems respective these three positions remain unsolved.

1. God - the urge toward Deity: Samuel Alexander.

Let me first state the general position of Neo-realism and Alexander's relation to it and second his idea of God.

More than two decades ago R. B. Perry expressed the hope that Neo-realists would soon recognize each other and then be able to share a common fellowship. This hope has not yet been realized, for the Neo-realistic movement is still in the adolescent stage and is thus still individualistic, yet it is truly characteristic of our new democratic spirit. In a sense the movement is rather reactionary, and raises more problems than it is able to solve. In a sense we can only speak of Neo-realists, rather than of a definite movement, yet there are certain tenets by which it might be recognized. All Neo-realists, and among them might be mentioned in England: Bertrand Russell; G. E. Moore, and Samuel Alexander, and in America: E. B. Holt, E. G. Spaulding, W. T. Marvin, W. P. Montague, W. B. Pitkin and R. B. Perry, agree on at least three principle doctrines. They are:

First, Neo-realism is a reaction against epistemology. It emphasized the limitations of knowledge in taking a position against the reflective procedure. The fundamental thing about knowledge is that it is a discovery of what things are, and not what we believe they are. We know things in themselves. That is, We know "Das Ding an sich." It is thus neither sympathetic with Berkeley nor with Kant. To know a thing is to know what it is independent of our knowledge. For example, if I have a toothache my toothache does not depend for its existence upon my knowledge, but it exists independent of knowledge.

Second, Neo-realism emphasizes the externality of relations. by which is meant that an external relation is one which does not determine either the nature or being of the related entities, that is, the nature of things is prior to that relation. In short, we can know something without knowing everything.

Third, Neo-realism is in agreement with the doctrine of emergence in evolution, namely, that something totally new arises in the process which cannot be predicted, nor can be explained in terms of mere additive qualities. It is only after the combination of all the elements has been observed that the outcome of recombination can be predicted.

These are the three chief tenets of Neo-realism. It is obvious that the greatest foe of the movement is Idealism, for it flatly refutes the spirituality of the universe. The cardinal principle of Idealism is the principle of esse est percipi, which asserts that to be is to be perceived. This is a false assumption. An object may have another status besides being perceived. Idealism fails to distinguish between the act of perception and the object perceived. To say that being and being perceived is the same thing is false. G. E. Moore¹ has attempted to refute Idealism by emphasizing the common-sense objects which exist apart from being perceived, and that a physical fact is not logically dependent upon some mental fact. He further argues, in another connection, that Idealism is wrong in stressing internal relations to the exclusion of external relations, for some relations are purely external. Also it is false to maintain that all relations modify their terms. Only relational properties are modified.

Alexander represents the most analytical exposition of the Neo-realistic position. In his language he is metaphorical, but his method is naive and denotated, that is, he begins with simple things and proceeds to the more complex, rather than from the complex to the simple. He is also neither polemical nor argumentative.

In his theory of knowledge he makes the likeness of mind

1. J. H. Muirhead, Philosophical Studies, Chs. I & IX.

and other objects similar. The mind is the highest order of finite empirical existent and it is a conscious quality. It is the object, image or memory, which arouses sensation. It is reality that provides the basis of sensation. The mental act is always correlated with and shaped or adapted to some non-mental object, though the object does not owe its existence to the act of mind, yet there is no mental act without the external object. Thus, to know things is one way of being together with things in space-time. Knowledge is comprehension of mind and object. In distinction to other material things which are also together in space-time, the knowing mind has the sense of awareness, or consciousness, and this is unique to the mind. The mind does not create things, it discovers them. Because the mind is selective it is not in comprehension with all things. Knowing is thus a simple matter, namely, awareness of things.

Things are what they are whether we know them or not. Objects are features of things which we fasten upon for analytical purposes or for the purpose of investigation, that is, it is a grouping of things.

What is Alexander's conception of God? This is the problem which I wish to take up next. He begins with the assumption that Space-Time is the Stuff from which all things are made, that is, of which matter and things are specifications.² Space-Time is motion in itself, which implies that it is unnecessary to have anything which moves it, but the universe is essentially in motion. There can be motion without the motion of a body. The world exists in Space-Time and not in Space and Time, and it is a world of events. Space-Time, he says, is pure motion before matter has been generated in it. Space and Time have no existence apart from each other, nor are they distinct.³ Space and Time are only abstractions from Space-Time, which is reality.

All things come from Space-Time.⁴ The universe develops out of the 'matrix' of Space-Time, by which new kinds of existences and new levels of value come into being. That is to say, in the course of evolution Space-Time is organized into various existents. Each successive level of existence shows its own characteristic quality, for there is a constant differentiation into higher and higher complexes. "Empirical things come into existence, because Space-Time of its own nature breaks up into finites. ...Mind is the last empirical quality of finites that we know, and we have seen it to be an emergent from the level of living existence. Quality is something empirical which in every case but that of

2. S. Alexander, op. cit., (2 Vols.) I. 172ff.

3. Ibid., I. 44.

4. Ibid., II. 341.

motion is seen to emerge from a level of existence lower than itself."⁵ The quality of each of these existents is distinct according to the kingdom in which it appears. The highest quality we know is mind. The successive levels of finite existences which emerge from Space-Time exhibit the characteristic quality of each level.⁶

(1) Deity and God.

There are two ways of defining God. First, "Primarily God must be defined as the object of the religious emotion or of worship."⁷ This is the practical or religious approach. However, the practical approach gives us no theoretical assurance of the reality of the object of worship, therefore it needs to be supplemented with a metaphysical definition, what place the object of worship occupies in the general scheme of things. Religion and metaphysics lean upon each other for support and their methods of approach in defining God are therefore complementary.

What is Deity? There are successive levels of finite existences, each with its characteristic empirical quality, the highest which is known to us now is mind or consciousness. "Deity is the next higher empirical quality to the highest we know;... at any level of existence there is a next higher empirical quality which stands towards the lower quality as deity stands toward mind."⁸ Time as the principle of growth and infinite, cannot be regarded as ceasing with the emergence of mind, hence we have to think of a Nisus in or of Space-Time which will bear us on to still higher qualities. Deity is thus a variable quality; it is always the next higher empirical quality so that for creatures possessing only the primary qualities (substance, causality etc) their God was matter.

What is the nature of Deity? The nature of Deity is not personal, and there is no value in believing in him as personal. And although the universe works out "so as to produce a plan," there is no teleological movement in the total universe.⁹ "The universe is pregnant with such a quality," yet we do not know the nature of it, "for we can neither enjoy nor still less contemplate it."¹⁰ All we know about Deity is how it is related to other empirical qualities which precede it in time. As a variable quality Deity changes with the growth of the world in time. The Nisus toward higher birth is Deity.

5. Ibid, II. 47.

6. Ibid, II. 67.

7. Ibid, II. 341.

8. Ibid, II. 341.

9. Ibid, II. 364.

10. Ibid, II. 347.

Alexander further speaks of God as possessing this quality of Deity but distinguishes between (1) God as actually possessing Deity and (2) God as tending towards Deity. God is thus the infinite world with its *nisus* towards Deity.¹¹ God as an actual existent is always becoming Deity but never attains it, for it is a process of unending pursuit. God, then, as possessing Deity is not actual but ideal, but God as the *nisus* toward Deity is actual and infinite. How can a variable God be the whole universe? There is "always the one universe of Space-Time which is God's body, but it varies in its empirical constitution and its Deity."¹² Space-Time does not grow bigger, hence God's body is always the whole Space-Time, but the quality of Deity is variable. The essence of God is his *nieus* toward Deity. His being and perfection increases as the universe increases. Deity in the strictest sense is not a creator but a creature; we are cooperating with God in contributing to his Deity. That is, God as being the whole universe is creative, but as Deity he is created.¹³

(2) Deity and Religion.

The object of worship is not a mere imagination. God is to worship as food is to hunger. "The religious conation which sets us in search of God is our groping out to the reality which is God."¹⁴ God is the religious object which stimulates us to worship. But how can a future quality affect us? Deity is a future quality and in the process of realization. The world which acts upon us and suggests worship to us is the actual world, but a world which contains the seed of its future, hence the future quality of Deity is felt by us, "not in its quality, for that cannot be known, but as giving a flavor to the experience of the whole world which it does not possess as merely an object of sense or thought."¹⁵ Religion according to this point of view means to get into communion with the future quality of Deity. The faith in the reality of God is substantiated by speculation, for religion is not a mere necessity of man's nature, either as a means of contentment or securing morality, it is man's outgoing to the whole in its divine quality, hence we need philosophy to postulate that object. There are four criteria which

"the religious sentiment requires of God (1) that he should be greater than man, (2) a universal or all-inclusive being, (3) different in quality from man, and (4) finally, responsive

11. *Ibid*, II. 363,361.

12. *Ibid*, II. 366.

13. *Ibid*, II. 397.

14. *Ibid*, II. 376.

15. *Ibid*, II, 379ff.

to man."¹⁶

This is in outline Alexander's definition of God. Now, how shall we estimate and evaluate it? In the previous section I have indicated the position of Neo-realism in general and that of Alexander in particular, especially his point of view of knowledge and idea of God. With that general background it will be now in place to give a more detailed estimate of his point of view and evaluate his contribution to the philosophy of religion.

(3) Monistic real world and traditional theology.

Neo-realism in general maintains the monistic real world. According to the theory of immanence and independence¹⁷ a given thing known enters into a relation which gives it the status in the mind, according to the former theory, and although an object may enter into the mind and assume the status of content, an idea of an object does not exhaust the object, according to the latter theory, for an idea has existence per se. Mind therefore is a relation of objects and a content of objects. Since our idea does not exhaust an object we do not wholly possess it and hence we can say an object has existence apart from being known. All we can say is, that an object has existence in one relation.

The bearing of this position has an important significance to traditional theology for its contention that God can have objective existence apart from being known. We have ideas of God's existence, but our ideas do not exhaust his reality, nor is his reality dependent upon our knowing of it. We have different ideas of God according to our different relationship with the object. The objective reality does not change, nor is affected by our ideas. The object which stimulates the experience is unanimous to all experience, but the object is not experienced alike by all. Our problem of explaining the experience of God is as difficult as is the explaining of any object which we experience, for we depend upon a certain aspect of experience. If we mean by the experience of God an experience of confidence in the universe, emotional release from tension, we experience it as something consistent, yet we need not all agree on the different phases of experience. God as the objective reality is not changed by our different experiences of him.

We test the objectivity of God by a comparison of our experience. We grow in our knowledge and therefore our knowledge of God increases. Reality has existence apart from our idea of it, and our idea of it is only partially corresponding to reality.

16. Ibid, II. 382.

17. R. B. Perry, op. cit., p. 316ff.

God has objective reality, existence, and is the factor of religious experience; he is the stimulus of the response. Any change wrought is real and has therefore a real object. "The real object and the perceived object are at the moment of perception numerically one, and that the real object may exist at other moments apart from any perception,"¹⁸ is the position taken by Epistemological Monism, and is thus defined according to the American Philosophical Association.

Neo-realism has many supporters, as I have already mentioned the leading English and American Neo-realists I need not refer to their names, but I wish to state in addition the chief influences behind the movement, namely: (1) The influence of the positive sciences, especially psychology and mathematics; (2) The disintegration of Absolute Idealism; (3) Neo-realism is a joint product of disguised psychological idealism and logical idealism.¹⁹

(4) Criticism of Alexander's idea of God.

I have already noted how Alexander distinguished between God as actual and as ideal, between God as possessing divinity and God as striving after Deity. He arrived at this conclusion as being more consistent than the idea of immanence and transcendence, which according to his view are irreconcilable, hence he prefers to speak of God as divinity and God as Deity. A transcendent being is one which exists outside the world of matter. Strictly speaking, it is deism, but "it shades off into theism according to the extent to which God is believed to enter into human relations."²⁰ Immanence means that God is a principle which pervades the whole of Nature and has no existence outside of Nature. God lives in the world. This is in essence Pantheism. (So Spinoza, Goethe, Wordsworth etc.). God is a being apart from the world, yet each part of the world implies his being, this is the position of Theism. Alexander concludes in his article to which I referred above, that both Pantheism and Theism have defects. In Pantheism God and the worshipper are indistinguishable, and the worshipper has no real existence apart from the divine. He says that transcendence and immanence mix no more than oil and water. God is a creature of time, himself still in the making and his divine quality or Deity is the next higher quality.

"Matter and spirit, stones, trees and men gather together into and sustain that quality of the world" "As our human existence with its prerogatives is nurtured by all that it transcends."²¹

This Deity is infinite, for it is the whole world, the new quality

18. D. C. Macintosh, Problems of Knowledge, p. 211.

19. Ibid, p. 217.

20. Hibbert Journal, XXV. 255, "Theism and Pantheism."

21. Ibid, p. 263.

of the universe which emerges in its evolution. Thus he says that it is in some such way that immanence and transcendence of God is affected but not in way of either Theism or Pantheism.²²

Alexander contends that God's nisus toward Deity is able to satisfy the religious need in man's quest for support in the new conception of security and growth, rather than in guaranteed providence, according to the older idea. Man has a part in shaping his own moral end, thus by cooperation with God we find security in human control. Matthew²³ would criticise otherwise:

"the religion of evolution so long as it remains merely a religion of evolution can never satisfy the deep desire of the spirit of man to stay itself upon One beyond change, on the Everlasting."

Alexander defines religion in terms of the experience of the object toward which man adopts the attitude of worship, which object is God. And he says:

"always, under whatever shape of sensible experience or fancy of reflection, there is the awareness of a mysterious something which enforces or pleads for recognition. And in that experience there is no question raised whether the object experienced exists or not.. the religious feeling and its object are given in one and the same experience."²⁴

The nisus towards Deity is continuous in the universe which is suggested by an ordered series founded in Space-Time itself. And the cosmos itself gives evidence that there is something yet to be; it is pregnant with a new 'level'.

(5) Meaning of continuity and identity of God according to Alexander's conception of God.

It is quite evident that Alexander's conception of God has been very fruitful and has stimulated considerable thought among other writers. Especially the two aspects of God - divinity and deity, the actual and the ideal, have led other writers to a similar view, although their starting point may have been different. Quite recently Professor Whitehead defined God in terms of two natures: primordial and consequential. Also Professor Wieman defined God as having an existential and possible nature. Both of these views show similarity to Alexander's point of view, yet there is considerable difference in their conclusions, as we shall see presently.

Professor Alexander's concept of continuity is very basic to his entire system. Space-Time is the stuff of reality; there is unending progress from lower to higher levels. His view of

22. Hibbert Journal, XXV. 446, a reply to Alexander's position.

23. W. R. Matthew, Evolution and God, p. 35.

24. Hibbert Journal, loc. cit., p. 251.

continuity is suggested by sensibly continuous experience. But since there are deficiencies of sense experience we must make good that deficiency by intuition. Alexander's position is thoroughly in harmony with the concept of continuity as I have defined it in the previous discussion. As long as the process reveals sufficient continuity of existence it is logical to say that there is unbroken continuity in the cosmic process. The emergence of new levels does not mean that each order of existence marks a definite break in the process and that continuity from one level to another is thus impossible, but rather the emergence of new qualities presupposes the continuity of process. Change, or emergence, does not mean the annihilation of structure or function, in fact in the continuity of process there must also be emergence of difference.

If God is a variable quality how can his continuity and identity in the emergence of new levels be substantiated?

We already clarified the two aspects of God - God as divinity being actual, and God as Deity being ideal. As a *nisus* toward higher levels of existence God is always divinity, but Deity a variable quality and every level of existence brings forth a new Deity. God as the *nisus* or eternal urge is not a variable quality but its function is to bring forth the new and different qualities which distinguish the higher levels. In this sense it is logical to say that God as the *nisus* in the cosmic process is both continuous and identical, for the character of God, namely, the urge to higher levels has the same identical function. Yet God is also different, for God's existential nature changes, for his qualities change at every new level of existence.

In respect to the urge toward new levels, or Deity, God is both continuous and identical through existence. According to my former analysis of identity, existential, functional and qualitative, the identity we can ascribe to God whom Alexander presents is a functional identity, for God displays the same character at the different instances of existence, in terms of the urge toward higher levels, and hence God as the *nisus* in the cosmic process serves the same function, which we can designate as identical.

The true object of religion is Deity, but it is God who manifests himself in the universe as the eternal urge toward higher levels of being. God never reaches finality. Deity is always a prospective quality yet to be achieved. God is thus absolved from evil, because since God has not yet attained Deity he cannot be held responsible for evil in the world. God in respect to Deity is finite and is not really a creator but a creature, still to be created.

2. God as Eternal Creative Good Will - E. W. Lyman.

As one of the leading theologians of the present time Professor Lyman seeks to apply the evolutionary conception to God. Being an Idealist in his philosophy he presents an interesting discussion on his idea of God. He defines God as "an experience which assures us of coworking with an Eternal Creative Good Will."²⁵ Such an experience comes to us in the realm of moral enterprise whether in the development of personality, or in the problem of social process, or in the interpretation of cosmic significance.²⁶ Modern life needs religion in the accomplishment of three great tasks: development of personality, reconstruction of social forces, discovery of moral purpose in the cosmic process, all of which are dependent upon man's experience of God as moral creativity and of being a coworker with the Eternal Creative Good Will.²⁷

Let us consider first what Lyman means by God when he speaks of him in these terms - personality, social forces, cosmic process.

(1) The achievement of personality.

Lyman indicates first how the experience of God is related to the achievement of personality and what aid for its accomplishment can be looked for from such an experience. What is the value and meaning of such an experience? Although it cannot be maintained that all experience of God leads to this aim, that is, the production of personality, it is nevertheless typical of Christianity, foreshadowed by the Hebrew prophets.²⁸ The experience of God produces personality by lifting one to the level of creative moral living, as well as giving power to propagate itself. Our supreme example is Jesus Christ himself, in whom the experience was most effective in the creation of moral values and sonship with God. Likewise, other New Testament figures, as well as some of the world's greatest religious leaders, this experience of God as moral creativity was essential.²⁹ The experience of God produces personality because it is grounded in reality, and God is not only an inner experience of moral creativity but an objective reality which promises value to life. The two do not completely merge, although they interpenetrate, for "The experience of God does not dissolve into that of moral creativeness, but is felt to be also

25. E. W. Lyman, The Experience of God in Modern Life, p. 36.

26. Ibid, p. 150.

27. Ibid, p. 4f.

28. Ibid, p. 12.

29. Ibid, p. 18ff.

a functioning in relation with a superhuman moral power."³⁰

(2) The problem of social process.

The nineteenth century began with a creed of progress, but then came the late war, because we were too late in our social awakening, and material progress outran moral progress. Although it is more difficult to see that there is any relation between the experience of God and social progress, Lyman contends that the only forces which can set the ideal in operation and sustain humanity in its endless task of reconstruction lie in the fact of the experience of God as moral creativity.³¹ Social progress is vitally bound up with the experience of God. Theism offers the only solution in social regeneration, but "the idea of God must be remoulded in the light of our newer ethical values and of evolutionary philosophy if it is to make a real contribution to the modern problem."³² Again, he says,

"The largest issue confronting our time is between an aristocratic deterministic, nationalistic ethic and the ethic of democracy, of moral freedom, and of internationalism."³³

By the reconstructed form of theism Lyman means the moral creativity which is produced in human personality. God is a striving, creating God, establishing the good. Man is a coworker with God when he experiences Him as the Eternal Creative Good Will. In this sense man becomes a coworker with God and shares in the struggle against evil. Rejection of theism is inadequate for a world-view, for it reduces the universe to chaos instead of order. Upon what validity does the experience of God rest? The objective validity rests upon the production of personality, and this gives us a clue to the meaning of the universe, for personality is only a partial verification, it "points on to social experience as the realm where it can be made more nearly complete."³⁴ Social progress postulates God, who promotes social regeneration or moral evolution, that is, a conscious experience of God is essential to promotion of social progress; also a world favorable to its realization. Social progress is thus both a mental and physical matter, involving the scientific control of nature for production.³⁵ The physical universe is thus not as indifferent or hostile to the social enterprise as it appears to be because the dominant principle in the universe is a Creative Intelligence...but "it is not

30. Ibid, p. 35ff.

31. Ibid, p.57-64.

32. Loc. cit.

33. Loc. cit.

34. Ibid, p. 85.

35. Ibid, p. 85-92.

predestined to be so, for there can be only true social progress except as man has an intelligent will toward progress."³⁶ "So when we postulate God as the underlying force in social progress, he thereby anticipates that the cooperative action of God will become a living experience to Him."³⁷ So Lyman reached the conclusion that in the fact of social progress the postulate of God has substantial verification. Our evidence for faith is found looking both backward and forward. The former shows the faith of the prophets, Jesus Christ, the reformers etc., ...the latter shows the possibilities how men may work together in the creation of a better world.

(3) The significance of cosmic evolution.

While the old difficulty, which evolution raised in regard to the fact that everything could be explained by Naturalism, has been removed by the recognition of evolution as a method of God's revelation, the late war became the cause of another fundamental problem about God's control of the universe.³⁸ Is the cosmos realizing a moral purpose?

Lyman advances his arguments after this order. First, he rejects the explanation given by mechanism that the world is the product of blind forces, and second, the finiteness of God. He is certain that there is evidence in the cosmic evolution of a comprehensive purpose.³⁹ He finds evidence for cosmic purpose in tracing the continuity of evolution backward rather than forward, and there we find the "purpose principle as indispensable for an adequate understanding of our universe,"⁴⁰ for the process reveals (1) that there is manifested in our present universe a cooperative social intelligence, (2) that this cooperative social force is transforming the planet; it is a positive force in the physical evolution of the cosmos, (3) that the future social evolution turns upon this cooperative intelligence, and (4) that we have an element of psychic selection long before the evolution of mind was reached, that is, conscious thinking. Further, he argues, we find nowhere a breach in the continuity of purposiveness in the universe. Purposiveness or teleology he defines in terms of organism rather than in terms of an outside source or external designer. That is, it is an immanent teleology. Neither chemical or mechanical explanations pushed to the limit can eliminate the reality of purpose in the universe. For this teleological continuity in the universe Lyman postulates a "Central Mind" of which the world purpose is

36. Ibid, p. 90.

37. Ibid, p. 92.

38. Ibid, p. 104.

39. Ibid, p. 107.

40. Ibid, p. 109ff.

its object. The cosmic forces are the offspring of God. God is thus a Universal God, not a finite or growing God. He is not the author of evil. Evil is not outside of man nor in the cosmic forces outside of God, but the cause of evil must be assigned to man. In the outworking of God's purpose there are no limiting conditions, except as they are inherent in a world of purpose.⁴¹ At this point he rejects Hobhouse's reasoning that the process is partially purposive and one of blind forces, because that would make God finite; however, Lyman finds Bergson's reasoning fruitful for his own arguments that mechanism is not unrelated to evolutionary forces but is "an aspect of the evolutionary process which in its deeper nature is a Creative Life."⁴² Mechanism is incapable of explaining reality. "All reality is included in one eternal process of creative evolution of which God is the inexhaustible source."⁴³

The limiting conditions under which God is working, in view of the fact of evil are: (1) that there are "new finite creative processes, relatively separate and not yet harmonized," (2) "the results of past creative activities which must be more fully organized and (3) processes of disintegration needing to be neutralized."⁴⁴ These limiting conditions are necessary on which the realization of the world purpose depends, hence evil has a place and explanation.

This process of cosmic evolution, manifested in the co-operative social intelligence at work in society, in the evolution of mind, in the psychic selection and inorganic selection, Lyman gives to it the name of Evolutionary Theism.

Lyman also realizes that an element of faith is necessary to hold such a point of view, as he holds, but not an underpinning faith but a faith which challenges us to move on. The limiting conditions under which God works temporarily retard the progress, but final victory is implied in an infinite purpose from the start. Such seems to be the logical deduction from Lyman's position.

Lyman rejects the finite non-cosmic God and adheres to the idea of God as the immanent controlling force in the cosmic evolution. This immanence is essentially moral creativity and therefore the morally creative God. His work is not all in the past. He is also active now, for he is not a static God. This unifying principle of moral creativity as throughout cosmic process gives us the experience of being coworkers with the Eternal Creative Good Will. This cosmic God is not a past God, but a present creative God.

41. Ibid., p. 120.

42. Ibid., p. 121.

43. Ibid., p. 122.

44. Ibid., p. 123.

He is the great Teacher who is leading us out into the adventures of life. Our whole interpretation of Evolution therefore rests back upon a characteristic type of religious experience of God as the creative moral purpose in the various realms of being and brings us into cooperation with this creative act.

Lyman thus concludes his thesis in saying that the new religion must be an experience of God expressed in terms of modern life, and that modern life is not self-sufficient but has need of religion. The new religion which will make the largest contribution to life must not be one which is based either upon a non-purposive creative force or upon ethical culture alone - these are inadequate; religion must be a consciousness of coworking with an Eternal Creative Good Will.

(4) An evaluation of Lyman's position.

Two things are very evident in Lyman's entire position: first, he has a practical interest at heart in pointing out the present spiritual emergency, and second, he is an Idealist in his philosophy by showing that cosmic purpose is basic upon a "Central Mind," which transcends and envelops both the physical and psychological orders.

It is very evident that Lyman accepts the doctrine of evolution, especially is that evident in his definition of God in terms of evolution, as a trend in nature, which is both social and cosmic in significance. His position might be characterized as a compromise with the old theology but oriented to the problems of modern life. He discards the old terminology of God and speaks of God in terms, and in the light of our newer ethical values and of evolutionary philosophy, as Personality, prophetic and filial consciousness, immanence, eternal, "a striving God," infinite Creative Life, Intelligence, Perfection etc.⁴⁵

What is God's relation to the cosmos, according to Lyman's conception? The moral God of personal and social faith is related to the cosmos to the extent that He is in the process of time and works creatively at each stage in the evolutionary process, but always in relation to the preceding stages and with a purpose for the following stages. Evolution however does not imply that the universe as a whole is evolving, or that God is within the time process, but that evolution is true in the sense that a process is going on within the Whole. God is not finite, except in one aspect, namely, that he has no control over evil, yet he is in creative relation to everything. Lyman is in direct harmony with emergent evolution which explains creation by God as creating now and always.

45. Ibid. p. 62ff.

This evolutionary process is one of unbroken continuity. Lyman reaches this conclusion by reading the process of evolution backward. But, does not such procedure eliminate much that really belongs to the evolutionary process? As this point he proceeds on fallacious grounds when he seeks to establish his argument of God as the Eternal Creativity in moral and cosmic realms, by retracing evolution. This is first of all a contradiction against the best known principles of Physics⁴⁶ by which we learn that it is impossible to retrace the steps of Nature, because there are so many irregularities in Nature which affect the periodic movements themselves. Lyman seems to lay considerable weight upon the argument that if we "seek to trace the continuity of the universe backward instead of forward"⁴⁷ we shall find sufficient evidence that there is a purposive principle operative in the universe, and that cosmic evolution manifests a comprehensive purpose. We meet with many difficulties, however, if we attempt to trace the continuity of the universe backward instead of forward, because it is simply impossible, unless the processes of evolution form a single continuous history, and there have been no gaps or new starts in the process. If there is emergence in the evolutionary process we find great difficulty in retracing the process backward. Or, if one takes the more extreme view that there is only unbroken continuity within the range of just one realm, and that we can only speak of continuity with those limitations, it is evident that in tracing the steps backward we do not get far in our search for evidence of a comprehensive purpose. Although we may agree with such views as these,⁴⁸ that the evolutionary process can be interpreted in terms of whole-making or progressive integration, and that evolution is continuous and identical in meaning, while in form there may be great variation, we cannot agree with Lyman that this accounts for purposiveness in the cosmic process.

The organic world is really the manifestation of the creative life, or of the Central Mind. Lyman suggests that what gives evolution its driving force and material is the Eternal behind it. And while he defines God in terms of Moral Creativity, he makes man the focal point in the universe, for the total cosmic process centers in the moral values only experienced by man. Thus, it is evident that God imposes self-limitations upon himself, because of the limiting conditions which are inherent in the nature of that purpose. If then the achievement in the cosmic purpose is dependent and conditioned upon man's cworking with that creative process,

46. The "principle of Carnot," or second law of thermodynamics.

47. Lyman, op. cit., p. 109f.

48. See: J. C. Smuts, op. cit., also, H. N. Wieman, op. cit.

God is limited in his omnipotence.

"So on the basis of evolutionary theism the Central Mind is conditioned at each point in evolution by the stages that have gone before and that coexist, and by the increasing spontaneity of individual centers of life; and yet without such conditions his purpose could not be accomplished."⁴⁹

(5) How consistent is Lyman's conception of God in the light of the problem of continuity and identity?

I have stated Lyman's position sufficiently in detail to evaluate now his conception of God in the light of the problem of continuity and identity, which is the central problem of my thesis.

Let me first state how Lyman seeks to establish the continuity of God in the cosmic process and what he means by that term. One of the main points which he makes and which is very fundamental to his entire position is the fact of continuity of God's function throughout the cosmic process. If continuity of function is impossible from one order of existence to another then Lyman's basic argument cannot stand. I find no objection to the contention of Lyman that God is continuous in the evolutionary process, or that the entire process is one of unbroken continuity. However, the method by which he seeks to establish continuity, namely, by re-tracing the steps of Nature, or by reading the continuity of the universe backward instead of forward, leads to serious objections, which I have already indicated. The validity of the process of continuity does not depend upon that method of procedure. Lyman tries to do more than is necessary to make consistent the concept of continuity. All we can say about continuity is that it is logical to infer it and that it is in harmony with the facts of modern science, yet it is still unverifiable. We have to assume that continuity in nature or within a process is possible. So long as there is sufficient continuity of process, whether it be in terms of structure, appearance or function, the concept of continuity is valid. We need not attempt to prove or even verify it. A more pertinent problem is this, to offer an explanation for the transition from one order of nature to another which is qualitatively different. I have already indicated how the emergence of differences does not invalidate the continuity of process, for it is possible for quantity to pass into quality, and differences of degree into differences of kind. The emergence of qualitative differences in nature does not render inconsistent the concept of continuity.

Lyman attempts to do more than to establish the continuity of God in the cosmic process, namely, by linking moral purpose to

49. Lyman, op. cit., p. 128f.

the process which is comprehensive of the entire universe. It is at this point that several questions might be raised. If God's moral creativity is conditioned by man's cooperation can it be said that God is omnipotent? In what sense is God identical? Is God's identity in terms of moral purpose tenable?

Lyman makes a positive contribution to religion in that he maintains and emphasizes the fact of God's moral creativity as operating through human nature, and that the outworking of God's spiritual plan or destiny is conditioned by man's cooperation. This is a misuse of both the term moral and identity. In the first place it is not necessary to posit a purposive comprehensive plan of God in order to validate his continuity of function throughout the evolutionary process. Continuity does not require such a strict assertion, as I have already shown. In the second place, the term moral cannot be made as elastic so as to be applicable to the various orders of existence, as Lyman attempts to do. Cosmic purpose⁵⁰ not only includes a certain degree of order, result and design, but also intent. Lyman even goes as far as to attribute moral purpose to God's character. In a strictly scientific sense we may speak of order and result as the sequence of certain events. To designate a trend in the universe as the real direction with intent is no longer in the domain of science. We must limit purpose, especially moral purpose, to the human level where alone it can be a reality. Lyman maintains that we see the purposive comprehensive plan of God by a critical observation of the evolutionary process, or again, that we simply feel that it should be so; both of these assertions are inadequate.

It is questionable therefore when Lyman asserts that the evolutionary process is headed somewhere and that there is a divine purpose running through it, whether that position is tenable if God's divine purpose is dependent on man's cooperation and participation. If purpose is implied from the beginning, then God is not in need of man's participation for the completion of his plan. On the other hand, if God's triumph and purpose is dependent on man's cowering with Him we have no assurance of the outcome of the plan.

The general position of Lyman is grounded upon the basis and the assumption that God as moral creativity is continuous and identical throughout the cosmic process. I have already shown that the continuity and identity of God are plausible, but to attribute moral creativity to God and substantiate God's identity of function in this term is simply impossible. God in terms of moral creativity cannot be identical in the cosmic process as a

50. E. E. Aubrey, "What is meant by Cosmic Purpose?" New Humanist, III, June 1930.

whole. The most anyone can assert about God as a moral creative God is that the human level manifests moral creativity, but the term moral cannot be applied to a prehuman level. I have indicated somewhat in detail in my third chapter how a concept has a social genesis, and that is has only meaning in a particular situation. What the concept moral might mean in purely cosmic relation nobody knows. At any rate it is illogical to apply such a term to a process in which the social background, out of which it arose, is lacking. The term moral has only meaning in the realm of social relations, and the application of the term in a pre-social stage is not permissible.

According to Lyman's view God is not only identical in his qualitative nature but also has functional identity throughout the cosmic process. The qualitative identity of God is preserved in the evolutionary process because God is the Central Mind behind the process and is therefore not subject to change in the same sense that the universe is in general undergoing change. The functional identity of God then is based upon the fact that God has the same aspect of moral creativity, whether it be on the purely cosmic level or in the realm of personality.

Thus, the strongest pillar of Lyman's conception of God reveals a serious weakness. In the first place, we have no means of showing that the cosmic process has a moral purpose running through it, and in the second place, the term moral creativity and good will have only meaning in the right social relations and cannot be pushed beyond the social realm. Lyman is quite right in his view that God is continuous in the entire cosmic process and that he manifests his creativity at every order of existence. But when he attributes identical moral function to God throughout the cosmic process, that view is untenable.

3. God as an order of existence and possibility, according to Professor Wieman.

In his recent book, Issues of Life, Dr. Wieman says that among the many issues of life one is of supreme importance: How to find God.

"What is that order of existence and possibility upon which we depend and to which we must conform, to bring human life to its highest fulfilment and to promote the greatest possible value?"⁵¹

First, let me pursue Dr. Wieman's interpretation of God and religion, and second, evaluate his position in the light of the main problem of this thesis, namely, the problem of God's identity in the integrative process of the universe.

The distinction between religion and morality is very fundamental to his entire philosophy. Religion is reconstructive and revolutionary while morality seeks to organize human interests harmoniously. Although both are intimately related, and may have a common root, each goes its way in pursuance of its own ideal. High religion should be moral, of course, yet morality is not identical to religion. Whatever in life is worthy of acceptance for all mankind as the object of supreme devotion is the religious object, that is, God. This is the function of religion, to give supreme devotion to God. High religion must recognize that our ideas and beliefs which we now hold may be different from that order which leads to the highest possible values; it must dedicate itself to that order, that is, to God. In great part that order is transcendent, unexplored and unknown, yet we can give our supreme devotion to it. High religion creates conflict with the natural order, for it is contrary to this order of value. Also, our ideas of what has potentially the highest value must always be subject to modification in the light of all that we discover.

Religion in this sense requires God. There can be no real religion without God. An ideal should not be made the object of supreme devotion; nor should we try to make the idea of God fit the needs and wishes of people. God is what he is regardless of what we think he is. The real test of religion is when the object of supreme devotion lifts life to its highest fulfilment. This type of religion presupposes the existence of God, for it is God who is "that order of existence and possibility which provides the highest values which ever can be actualized."⁵² God is then worthy of allegiance of all mankind - this is real religion. Thus, religion is not mere believing, it is action, thinking,

51. H. N. Wieman, Issues of Life, p. 5.

52. Ibid, p. 135.

feeling etc. "Religion is reacting to an object, personal or impersonal, one or many, existent or ideal, as though it were the object to which all human life should be devoted."⁵³

(1) What is God and how do we know him?

God is "that Something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare and increasing abundance."⁵⁴ God is not the whole universe but only certain conditions when "taken collectively constitute the Something which must have supreme value for all human living."⁵⁵ Measuring value in terms of human need he is above all human existence and value. God is precisely that object, however unknown, which brings life to its maximum value. When life is at its best it is in search of that object, that is, God, upon whom life is dependent for the achievement of the highest values. "God is that order of existence and possibility by virtue of which the greatest possible good is truly a possibility and can be achieved by human effort."⁵⁶ Although human effort can become instrumental in bringing to pass the greatest value, it is not possible through human effort alone, but it is only possible because there is an order which has the possibility of greatest value without which human effort "would be entirely futile and foolish."

The universe displays many orders of existence, and God is one order of existence, an order which is partially existence and partially possibility. There is no single all-inclusive order, nor can God be identified with such an all-inclusive order. God is not limited by his existential nature, for he has also possibilities, that is, possible values yet to be achieved. Since God is that order which makes for possible values any unattained possibility can only be achieved in cooperation with that order. Humanism is a religion which professes to attain the highest value without dependence upon that order which has the possibility of greatest value. Yet, there is also another kind of religion which has God only by name but in reality it has no God at all, but God is only a symbol which quickens the imagination, but it does not make God the objective order upon which life is dependent for its greatest value.

There is not only order but also chaos in the flux of change in the universe, otherwise there could be no value. But, "how pervasive and dominant throughout the whole process of existence may be this order constituting value we cannot here say."⁵⁷

53. Ibid, p. 138.

54. H. N. Wieman, Religious Experience and Scientific Method, p.9.

55. Ibid, loc. cit.

56. Issues of Life, p. 164.

57. Ibid, p. 239.

It is not inconsistent to speak of God as an order or as process. Every order of existence is the order of some process and every process which can be described is the exemplification of some order. God is both order and process, or an order of process with possibilities.

God as an order which characterizes the process of the universe is an integrative process which is going on in the entire universe. It is an order of interdependence and mutual functioning. This order is characteristic of different levels of existence. On the physical level the integrating process is almost perfectly developed. So also on the biological level. In human life this interaction and interdependence is not so perfect, for here the process is more complex, but also more valuable. Human effort plays an important part in bringing about a closer mutual integration in the social realm, yet the fulfilment of the integrative process does not wholly depend on man. The principle which integrates human beings on this level and which brings about cooperation and harmony is love. Integration and mutual support on this level requires a conscious mutual understanding, and it is this point which distinguishes it from integration on the level of organic integration. So then on the level of human society conscious effort is essential to a more progressive integration. Thus man has a part to play in this progressive integration, yet it is a process which goes on independent of human purpose. But, if humanity would be lifted to the highest possible good, it must cooperate and make right adjustment to this order. It is the very nature of the universe that progressive integration is possible, and the scope is cosmic in its range, so that from the level of electrons to human personality progressive integration goes on and characterizes the whole cosmic process.

God is not personality because personality requires communication, and personality does not constitute the greatest value we know, for it is only one component in the greatest value. An isolated personality is impossible. Development of personality by communication we mean more than mere adaptive reaction, which is on the basis of an understanding of signs, while communication requires an understanding of symbols. Animals understand signs, but only human beings can understand symbols. Greatest value is shared experience or community which is never a personality but an interaction between personalities. For example, Friendship is one greatest value. Personality is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end. God cannot be personality, understanding personality in terms of its meaning on the human level.

God should be the object of supreme devotion instead of an ideal. By ideal we mean "some human idea of a possible good to be

attained by human effort."⁵⁸ But the idea of what is good and what truly is good are not necessarily identical.

How do we know God? God as the order of existence and possibility which provides the highest values, if we make proper adjustment to it is "largely unexplored." Our religious devotion to God is thus a devotion to something which is only in part known. In order to say how we know God we must distinguish between immediate experience and knowledge by description. Immediate experience is not knowledge; it only forms the data upon which knowledge is founded. Knowledge by description is scientific knowledge and can be experienced by any. Our knowledge of God is not outside of scientific knowledge where we cannot test or examine it, but "all knowledge must ultimately depend upon science...and the knowledge of God must ultimately be subjected to scientific method."⁵⁹ God is an object of experience similar to our experience of any physical object, such as trees, houses etc, thus he enters our immediate awareness. If he were only an object of speculation we could only know him through logical concepts and propositions. So then if God is an object of experience we experience him in a sensuous way, and hence scientific knowledge of him is possible. The reason why we have not clarified our experience of God is that we have not applied sufficiently the scientific method, and because the experience of God is very complex compared with the experience of other objects. Scientific method is the only trustworthy method of getting knowledge and truth about things, whether it be truth of the sciences, or of common sense or that of love and devotion. We are still behind in applying scientific method to religious experience and God.

What is the nature of religious experience? In religious experience we are aware of the total datum. It is a mystical experience. We are aware of God and our knowledge of him is knowledge by acquaintance. It is the function of scientific method to interpret this experience of the total datum so that it may become knowledge. The ladder upon which life ascends is constituted by scientific knowledge on the one hand and religious experience on the other. The mystic state, which is a state of religious experience in the rough, is a meaningless experience, for it is not a cognitive state. Yet, mystical experience enables us to escape the hard outer shell of life and merge with the total event of experience.

When do we experience God? In a time of stress and defeat, and when the established system of habits and responses are frustrated. At such a time we are thrown into confusion and we

58. Ibid, p. 157.

59. Religious Experience and Scientific Method, p. 23.

have a response by which we become aware of the total experience - this is religious experience. In this experience we get an indubitable datum which must be scientifically defined if it is to become true knowledge. But not all religious experience is limited to a time of crisis; it also comes in solitude. In the latter sense it depends upon the art of religious practices carried on by the individual.

Dr. Wieman is very insistent that we must define God in terms of concrete experience. Definition of God in terms of metaphysical reasoning or theological or mystical methods leads to superstition, or at least to an abandonment of God entirely by the scientific mind. We also avoid picturing God according to our wishes or imagination. In short, it means that if we define God in terms of concrete experience as an objective being, we have a method by which we can ascertain truth, not by intellectual manipulation but by experimental operations, that is, scientific method. Thus, placing God in a noumenal realm, as Kant and his successors did, inaccessible to experience, is no longer tenable in scientific thought. Our knowledge of God is not a special type of knowledge but is knowledge gained by objective, concrete experience. Mystical experience only furnishes the datum which scientific method must clarify and define.

Devotion to God as an order of existence and future possibilities of value presents no problem to Dr. Wieman's thinking, for he says that such a God can claim our supreme devotion because he sustains us. Living on the borderline of future possibilities is a quest, yet it sustains us and guides us to the realm where ultimate values lie. This striving of life is sustained not by a single factor or the sum of several factors - air, sunshine, biological and chemical processes etc., but by the special order which may be called progressive integration.

"The supreme intellectual problem of our existence is to get more accurate knowledge of the precise nature of this interaction; and the supreme practical problem is to conduct human life in conformity to its requirements. Hence God is the proper object of supreme devotion for all human living when living is intelligent."⁶⁰

Prayer as an attitude which brings certain consequences to pass, that is, right adjustment to God, is efficacious if the worshipper seeks to effect a change in the existing order, rather than to have God do things for him. Maturity requires devotion to unexplored possibilities. We must live experimentally, for the day of fixed and certain belief is past. Theory and belief are

60. Ibid., p. 178.

only tentative. Our present age is especially marked by swift changes, and if the state of existence changes it means that possibilities of value change. Devotion to possibilities of value gives us passion and drive in life. In order to achieve the greatest possibilities of value we must have a driving propulsion, and it is devotion to unknown possibilities of value, that is, God, that will give or awaken in us a passionate seeking. "The great issue is this: Shall we try to use the order of value as an instrument to achieve our ideals or shall we use our ideals as instruments to achieve the order of value?"⁶¹ It is a question as to whether the ideal should be subordinated to God, or God to the ideal.

(2) An evaluation of Dr. Wieman's point of view.

In attempting to make God and religious experience as intelligible as any objective experience Dr. Wieman is thoroughly in rapport with modern thought. His attempt to make religious experience and the object of religious experience as scientific as any experience which can be verified in terms of scientific method is a very wholesome attempt. This tendency is becoming widespread in present day religious thought and Dr. Wieman represents one of the more popular exponents of the scientific-empirical movement in modern theology.

There are however many opponents to this tendency and they cannot find any ground of agreement, for they do not believe that theology can ever become an empirical science. They maintain that the distinction between science and theology is so fundamental that no combination can ever become effective. Dean Knudson says, for instance, that theology deals with the cause-world, and science with the space-time world. Scientific experience is one thing and metaphysical experience another.

As I have already shown Dr. Wieman does not exclude the value of mystical experience, nor that of speculation, as a method of logical procedure. Both are essential. But in order to get accurate knowledge - truth, we must subject our experience to observation, that is, to scientific method. I think he would also agree with Professor Whitehead in saying that a metaphysic and speculation are most essential to a world-conquering religion. A purely social or communal religion without a metaphysics cannot survive long. Even in science there is an element of speculation, but only as we apply scientific method do we get verifiable facts and thus scientific knowledge. It is only as we apply scientific method to religious experience that we are able to remove the dross from the gold and bring religion in due respect. It will

61. Ibid., p. 26.

also enable religious people to share in a common experience which is verifiable in terms of scientific knowledge. The application of scientific method to religious experiences will have all the limitations of the method itself, yet as a purgative power of sentiment in religion it is invaluable.

As long as we limit God to the noumenal realm and science to the phenomenal realm there exists a breach between scientific knowledge and religious experience, in fact, no knowledge is possible in religious experience, for it can only be a matter of faith. These two realms can only be reconciled by making God an objective fact which can be experienced. We can thus generalize our religious experience and scientific knowledge into scientific terminology. It was Ritschl who sought a reconciliation between science and religion by limiting religion to Werturteile and science to Seinurteile, that is, value judgments and judgments of being. This classification is too rigid and caused a duality between science and religion, and besides was not true to fact, for science cannot be limited to being alone, nor is it true that religion deals only with the unreal world. Dr. Wieman overcomes this duality in making religious experience an experience of an objective datum. God is not a system of concepts, but he is the object which gives rise to our religious experience; so, God is not placed in the noumenal realm or order of value alone, but he is in the order of nature as an existing order and possibility of further value. Our experience of God and our experience of any object rest upon a common basis and can be reduced to scientific knowledge.

In his books, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, ch. XI, Dr. Wieman gives an exposition of Professor Whitehead's conception of God as the "Principle of Concretion." In this chapter he shows that knowledge about God is exceedingly valuable, although adjustment to God through worship and experimental living is even more essential than knowledge about Him, for we can make adjustment even though much about God is still unknown. He proceeds to show that God as the "Principle of Concretion" is conceptually knowable and meets the religious and scientific tests. Since the publication of Process and Reality, Whitehead's latest book, Dr. Wieman has made additional interpretation of Whitehead's idea of God.

Professor Whitehead approached God from the standpoint of physics and mathematics, and made a metaphysical assumption about the nature of God, namely, that he is the "Principle of Concretion" by which he means that everything that exists involves in its existence the totality of all being. The entire universe is focused and crystallized in every particular thing, but not only things but also abstract forms enter in which are not existent things in themselves, so that the total realm of possibilities enters into every

existent thing to make it what it is. This prehensive unification of the many into one is concretion. There are various levels of prehension, for instance, a man prehends the universe differently than a stone. This principle of concretion is inherent in all nature and this is God. This is not Pantheism, for God is simply that one sustaining all-pervading character which the universe displays. God is both less and more than the total concrete world of being. He is less because he excludes evil. He is more because he transcends the concrete world, for he is also possibility.

In an unwritten source Dr. Wieman has given further criticisms of Whitehead's conception of God, which I might state summarily as follows: (a) God is not merely a principle but a process exemplifying a principle. God as a principle does not do anything, for a principle does not exist. It is only a process that brings something about. (b) In his recent book, Process and Reality, Whitehead corrects his former position, and he speaks of God as having two natures - primordial nature, that is, the principle of concretion, and consequent nature, that is, what reality is or becomes in consequence of the process of existence. Thus God is not only an existent order but an order of possibility as well. This conclusion he reached by pure speculation and not by observation, to which Dr. Wieman replies that it is not adequate ground for religion. (c) Nor does God constitute the only order of process and possibility. God is that one order that carries the highest possibility. There are various orders in the universe but this one order sustains us, and makes highest values possible. (d) Also, he says, actuality is in itself value. Dr. Wieman radically departs from this point of view. Value must somehow be contributory to or related to our experience whether it be conscious experience or not. To say actuality is value in itself is simply not true.

In his chapter on Personality Dr. Wieman makes a singular contribution by showing that God cannot be personality, for personality is not an end but only a means to an end and implies communication on the social level. God must be more than personality, he is the integrative process which characterizes the entire cosmic process.

What implication does Wieman make in his conception of God regards the continuity and identity of God? God is not static and fixed, but a God who changes progressively and attains a higher and more complex being himself. He is operative at each level of being and has possibility of value yet to be achieved. God in terms of progressive integration is continuous through the cosmic process, and serves the same function at each order of existence. Discontinuity of existence is impossible, also functional continuity must be ascribed to God, since he is operative at every level of being

God as an order of existence and possibility is an order which is present in the entire cosmic process, and changes with every emergence of a new level, which means that not only does his existence change but also the possibility of his further existence and value. So long as the structure of an existential order is not annihilated it is logical to designate that order as continuous from one level to another. There are no unbridgable gaps, and absolute discontinuity would be a contradiction of being. The difference of characteristics and qualities of the various orders is not so much a difference of kind as it is a difference of degree. The characteristics of material existence almost approximates those which characterize life and personality. God as that one order among the many orders in the total cosmic process is not only continuous but also identical in his function of promoting highest value. His identity is thus not a qualitative or existential identity, but a functional identity.

It is only by implication that Dr. Wieman makes allowance for God's identity, as an identity of function. God in terms of existence, quality or possibility is variable. Only in function is God identical, whether he is operative at the level of physico-chemical substance, or on the plane of personality, his functional identity consists in promoting highest values, for he is progressively integrative at every order of existence. God's identity is preserved in the cosmic process so that his function at the atomic level to the level of personality is identical in meaning, namely in promoting highest values. This process of integration has eventuated in humanly experienced values, all of which are possible because the order which promoted and made possible experienced values, is greater than any humanly experienced values.

The position of Dr. Wieman regards his conception of God is very satisfactory. There are still some unsolved problems which I shall indicate in my concluding pages of this thesis.

CONCLUSION: The problem in review.

It will be well now in conclusion to state the problem which was under consideration in this thesis in review. After having given a historical background of evolutionary theism I sketched and evaluated the positions of three representatives of modern theological thought - Alexander, Lyman and Wieman. According to Alexander God is a trend in the universe, a variable quality striving after Deity, hence God is a new God at every level of existence. God's identity is thus an identity of function, namely the urge toward higher levels. God as a trend has no real purpose in view, although the process works out as though there was a purpose in the process. According to Lyman's interpretation

God is progressively manifesting himself in the evolutionary process, in the cosmic, social and personal realm, but behind the process is posited a Central Mind which gives the driving force, hence there is purpose in the universe and God has the same meaning on the cosmic realm as on the social. God then has an identical purpose, but as I have shown there are no grounds whatever upon which this view can be substantiated. For Dr. Wieman God is that one order among the many orders with further possibility of values. This view is rather tenable, for it makes sufficient allowance for that aspect of God's nature which is still a possibility, and God's identity consists in promoting highest values.

How valid is the position of evolutionary theism in the light of modern thought? It is evident that the idea of evolution in general has universal acceptance among modern thinkers. Its permanent contribution does not consist in the fact of offering a theory which is unmodifiable, but one which offers a method by which we can give a comprehensive interpretation of the universe. The validity of the type of theism which seeks to place God in the evolutionary process as a *nisus* or trend is still in need of clarification, especially in regard to the problem of continuity and identity. Although there seems to be much agreement among theists in applying the idea of change to God, they still are at issue whether the universe as a whole is evolving and that God is within the time-process, or whether evolution is only true, or applicable, in the sense that the process is going on within the whole.

What is the problem of God's identity and the modern trend in theistic philosophy? In general we noticed that the problem of God's identity has received little consideration in the writings of theistic philosophers, in fact, many either obscure or else show little interest in it. The reason why that is so I do not know. I have tried to show that the theistic philosopher cannot dispense with the problem, if he wishes to make tenable the view that God is a definite trend in the cosmic process. The scientist may well dispense with the problem, but not the theist. He must show what meaning the concepts of continuity and identity have in the emergence of new orders of existence. To neglect this problem leaves a serious weakness in any position which attempts to uphold God's creative function in the universe. It is evident that the view of Emergent Evolution has rescued us from the state of despair which the physical sciences ushered in a few decades ago. This view gives solid ground to the theistic philosopher for his view that this elan toward more wholeness or creative integration is God. A neglected phase of this position is that so few writers attempt to show what meaning the continuity and ident-

ity of God have in the process of cosmic change. It is only by implication that this aspect of the problem has been considered in the writings of those who have interest in theism. I have shown that the position of S. Alexander and H. N. Wieman is quite tenable, for in both the meaning of continuity and identity is one of function. However, there are still some unsolved problems, as I shall presently point out. E. W. Lyman is not quite as successful in his attempt to show that God has an identical function and identical quality in the cosmic process.

Some Unsolved Problems.

To define God in terms of a nisus or trend in the cosmic process, as being in the process with further possibility rather than an unchanging being behind it, requires still more clarification, especially in regard to the meaning of continuity and identity.

(1) The continuity of God can only be established on the assumption that the cosmic process is one of unbroken continuity. The theistic philosopher must show how valid such an assumption is by indicating what approaches are possible. In terms of philosophy he might show the logic of establishing continuity in terms of possibilities. In terms of psychology he might show how form or structure is altogether subservient to function. Although continuity cannot be verified on this basis it is within the realm of logic to make conceptual constructions and attempt to harmonize them with observation of phenomenal facts.

(2) If God's identity is limited to the identity of function how adequate is our terminology to designate that identity? The implication of the continuity of God as a trend in the cosmic process is that in some respects God is not only an order of existence and possibility but also identical whether in structure, quality or function. It became clear that identity of existence and quality is impossible. Quality is always variable, for with the emergence of every new order it changes. I have shown therefore that Lyman's position is untenable, because the term moral creativity cannot be applied to God's function in purely cosmic relations. H. N. Wieman makes God's identity consist in the one functional identity of promoting highest values, and by highest values he means shared experience or an interaction between possibilities. This requires however a definition of value so as to render consistent the meaning of value from the atomic level to the level of personality, or from value in terms of mere actuality on the prehuman level to value in terms of shared experience on the level of personality.

